

(Best Deal)
to my best friend.
I hope to be of part - who
ever have in company.

987. and me.
London Oct.

Dr. William Ford.
A. P. H.

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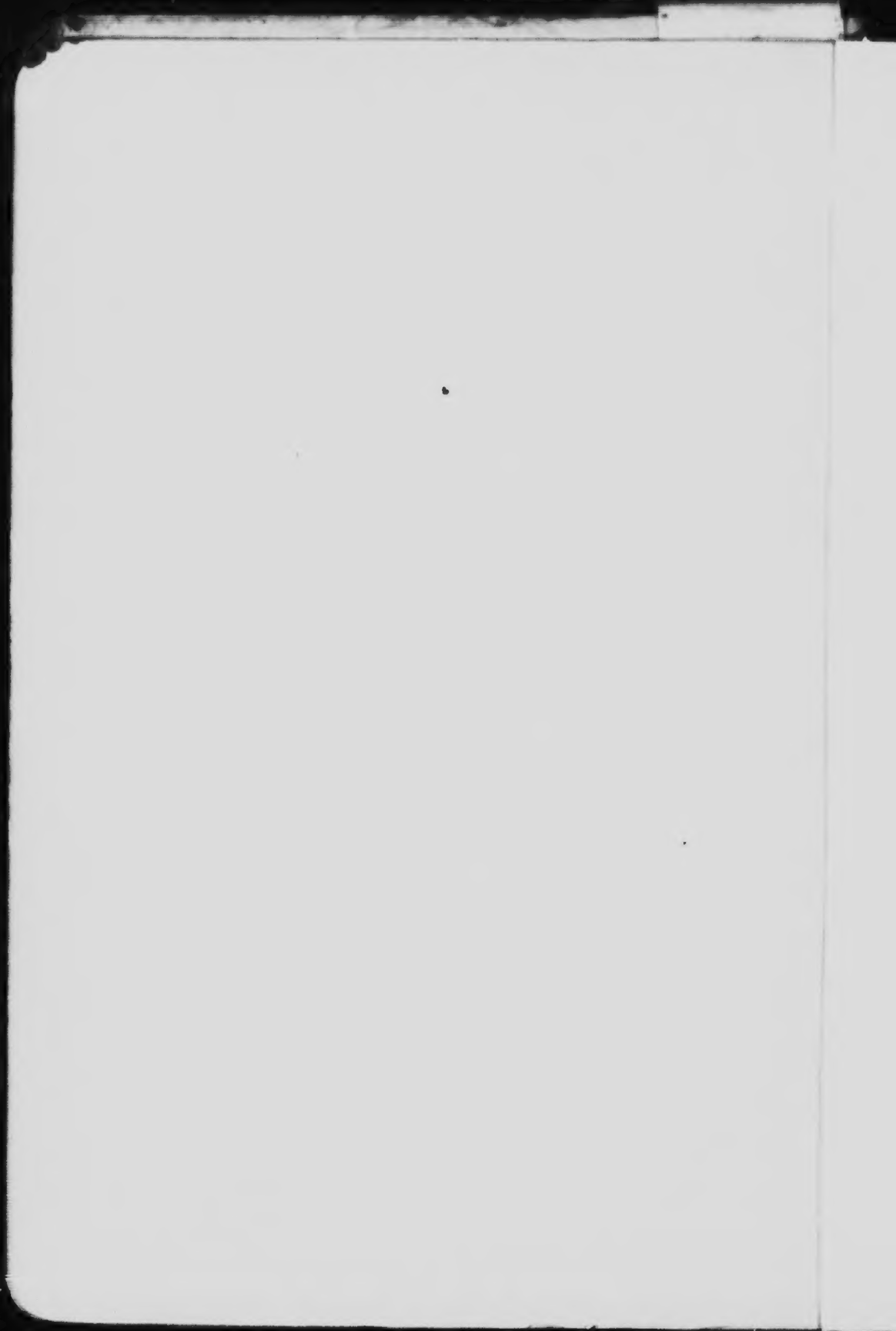
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POETICAL WORKS OF
ROBERT BROWNING





ROBERT BROWNING.

POETICAL WORKS OF
ROBERT BROWNING

Vol. 3



POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
REV. EDWARD FREDERICK HOERNLÉ
M.B. EDIN.

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INTRODUCTION

I

POETIC excellence may be of two kinds. One poet is great on account of the perfection of *form*. What strikes us is not so much what he says, as how he says it. He is the great Master of Style. The other is great by reason of the *subject-matter*. He too must know how to say it, else he would not be a poet at all ; but really important is what he says. The first is simply artist. We are chiefly concerned with the workmanship ; the personality disappears behind his art. His work we admire ; himself we do not miss. The second has something of the thinker in him ; or rather of the prophet, who has a message to tell. Also something of the hero, who leads. His work is never complete. When he ceases to sing, we miss him ; and his place cannot be adequately filled by any other. Of this second order was Robert Browning.

II

Of the life of Browning there is no need to say much. With one exception, it was an uneventful life. He was born at Camberwell on May 7, 1812. His father was a bank-clerk, as his grandfather before him had been ; his mother was the daughter of a German merchant who had settled in Dundee, and had married a Scottish wife. He received a desultory education : but from his father, who was well versed in the lore of many nations, he acquired a great deal of out-of-the-way knowledge, and was well grounded in classical literature. Both parents fostered also in him the love of music and painting ; and the love and the knowledge of these have left their mark on his poetry. At the age of twenty he deliberately adopted, with his father's consent, the profession of literature. In 1832 appeared his first poem, *Pauline*, which did not find much public favour, but whose excellence of promise was at once recognised by competent judges, amongst them John Stuart Mill. In swift succession he wrote (1835-46) *Paracelsus*, *Strafford*, *Pippa Passes*, and eight numbers of *Bells and Pomegranates* containing several plays, and a long list of Dramatic Lyrics and Romances. Then occurred the great event of

his life—his marriage to Miss Elizabeth Barrett, herself a poet of no mean order. She was a confirmed invalid, never leaving her house, and rarely her couch; and her father, a man of peculiar temperament, hugged, if I may say so, the idea of her being an invalid, and tyrannised over her with the tyranny of an unreasonable love. Robert Browning and Miss Barrett first became acquainted with one another through their poetry, and soon love met love. Presently the doctors declared that her only chance of recovery was to go to Italy. Then the father's love revealed its selfishness—he absolutely forbade the journey. In this dilemma Browning stepped in. He determined to take her there. And as they could only go as husband and wife, they were secretly married in St. Pancras Church (September 12, 1846), and after a few days set out for Italy. The result justified the deed. Fifteen happy years they lived together—Mrs. Browning in very much better health than she had ever enjoyed before—mostly in Italy. Here she died (June 28, 1861); her memory an abiding and living treasure to her widowed husband. He set vigorously to work, pouring forth a large wealth of poetry, among others his masterpiece, *The Ring and the Book*, enjoying both Society and his ever growing circle of friends. Until at last to him also came the appointed end; and from the Italy he had always loved, he went to join his beloved wife (December 12, 1889). Only a few days before his death, he corrected the proof-sheets of his last volume of verses, *Asolando*. In the Epilogue, one of the noblest retrospects of life ever written by a brave man, he describes himself as

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamt though right were worsted, wrong could triumph,
 Held we fell to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

In these words lives—still, among us—the whole Browning.

III

Browning is pre-eminently the poet of passion. He sings of the passionate life, and the passionate love, whether the love of man for woman, or the love of ideals. Love is the central theme of Browning's poetry. Now all poets sing of love. And so much has been said by them on it, and has been well said, that it seems hardly possible to say anything new about it. The skill of the poet would seem to be this, to sing the old theme in new melody; his originality consists in the new form. But it seems to me Browning has succeeded in really saying something new. Love is to most poets their central theme, because it occupies their thoughts more than anything else; and also because it plays such an important part, for happiness or disaster, in men's lives. But to Browning love is more. Know-

ledge comes from simplifying the manifold. So Newton reduced the movements of all bodies, celestial and terrestrial, to the one primal force of gravitation. Some such reduction Browning has achieved with Love as the basal element of all forms of the higher life. It is not only the moving force of all forms of activity, but also the clue to every intellectual problem. Love holds together the Universe in rationality and beauty; what the *idéai* were to Plato, or the Will to Schopenhauer, or—and this is perhaps more to the point—what Righteousness was to the Hebrew prophet, that Love is to Browning. It is the principle of intelligibility in the world. Compare him with Tennyson. In verse of exquisite beauty and rare spirituality, does Tennyson too sing of the great master passion love; the good it can do, but also the evil. There is with him always a distrustful note. Man must love wisely rather than strongly. Love must be tempered, and modified, by other things—reason, law, conscience. Left to itself, it is apt to go astray. For it is only one of the foundations of life. Now Browning too knows of the disastrous effects of a disordered love. But that is, he would say, not because you have loved too much (to the exclusion of other things), but because you have loved too little—not loved enough. It is as with the sceptic who asserts that the end of reason is doubt. His fault is not that he has reasoned too much, but too little; if he will only think more, and more resolutely, he will pass beyond his scepticism into knowledge. So to Browning the cure of an ill-regulated love is not to love less, but to love more—more genuinely, more strongly. Let a man throw himself unreservedly upon love, and the disturbing factors will disappear. Most people fail in love for one of two reasons. They fail because what they desire is rather the gratification of their love, and having got it they are not satisfied—for love, like all true life, has in it a true principle of a “*progressus in infinitum*”; step by step it leads into a larger life. Or they fail—more commonly—because they do not love resolutely, but feebly and haltingly; are deterred by fear and doubt and conventionality. But, says Browning, a man is truer to himself, and to the reality of things, if, having taken an aim, even though it be a wicked and immoral aim, he carry it out boldly and resolutely, than if he leave it undone by hesitating and doubting.

“ I hear you reproach, ‘ But delay was best,
For their end was a crime . . .
The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin.
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is—the unlit lamp, and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.”

The Statue and the Bust.

Hence strenuousness, hopefulfulness, in short, a healthy optimism, is an outstanding note of Browning's poetry. Struggle, battle, temptation, even rebuff and failure—all are good; for in them is yet manifest

life ; and precisely because they are felt as struggle and even failure, there is in them the presage of a fuller life. Browning deals by choice with the problems of life ; the more complicated they are, the more is he drawn to them. Yet is he not primarily philosopher, still less metaphysician, but poet ; and his writings have the distinct note of poetry. For they are not only illuminating, but inspiring. Poetry, one true poet has said, is criticism of life. Browning is much occupied with the true values of life, and how the soul bears itself amidst the many demands and temptations of life. And another poet, a true poet and among the greatest (Wordsworth), has said, that "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge ; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." It is in this impassioned expression that Browning proves himself a true poet. There is apparently much argument in his poetry, but really it is an appeal to the whole man ; appeal strong and stirring, evoking ready and triumphant response. And inasmuch as his argument is not about the small and fleeting concerns, but the great and abiding interests of life, and his appeal addresses itself not to the baser passions and the lower side of man, but to the nobler passions and the best self, he is something of prophet as well as poet. Therefore has his poetry been of real help to men on whom the problems of life and thought press heavily. Many there are who feel that to them the old answers of theologian and dogmatist are, if not exactly false, yet insufficient—they do not satisfy the heart. These turn to the great poets, because it seems to them that great poets, like the authors of Job or of Faust, had truer insight into the heart of such problems as "God's ways with man," than had the writers of religious treatises ; and that there is more genuine theology in Dante's *Commedia* than in the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas. To such, Browning comes with a message ; and it is this : Life is good because it is full of problems and difficulties and temptations. For in them a man "goes to prove his soul" (*Paracelsus*). Think courageously, act bravely, love to the end, and you will find in the battle and struggle itself the supreme greatness and value of soul, and be in touch with the great soul-satisfying reality—God. "He, at least, believed in Soul, was very sure of God" (*La Saisiaz*).

EDWARD F. HOERNLÉ.

Note.—The Browning Literature is vast. But indispensable is Mrs. Sutherland Orr's "Life and Letters of Robert Browning" (12s. 6d.). Very suggestive is "Robert Browning," by G. K. Chesterton (2s. net) ; and most illuminative and helpful "Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher," by Prof. Henry Jones (6s. net).

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
PAULINE: A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION . . .	1	STRAFFORD: A TRAGEDY —Continued.	
PARACELUSUS—		ACT V.	
I. PARACELUSUS ASPIRES . . .	23	SCENE I. WHITEHALL . . .	141
II. PARACELUSUS ATTAINS . . .	38	" II. THE TOWER . . .	142
III. PARACELUSUS . . .	50	SORDELLO—	
IV. PARACELUSUS ASPIRES . . .	70	BOOK THE FIRST . . .	151
V. PARACELUSUS ATTAINS . . .	82	BOOK THE SECOND . . .	168
STRAFFORD: A TRAGEDY—		BOOK THE THIRD . . .	185
ACT I.		BOOK THE FOURTH . . .	201
SCENE I. A HOUSE NEAR WHITEHALL . . .	103	BOOK THE FIFTH . . .	218
" II. WHITEHALL . . .	108	BOOK THE SIXTH . . .	234
ACT II.		PIPPA PASSES: A DRAMA—	
SCENE I. A HOUSE NEAR WHITEHALL . . .	114	DEDICATION . . .	252
" II. WHITEHALL . . .	116	INTRODUCTION . . .	253
ACT III.		I. MORNING . . .	256
SCENE I. OPPOSITE WEST- MINSTER HALL . . .	122	II. NOON . . .	264
" II. WHITEHALL . . .	124	III. EVENING . . .	271
" III. THE ANTECHAM- BER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS . . .	129	IV. NIGHT . . .	277
ACT IV.		KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES: A TRAGEDY—	
SCENE I. WHITEHALL . . .	132	FIRST YEAR, 1730.—	
" II. A PASSAGE AD- JOINING WEST- MINSTER HALL . . .	135	KING VICTOR. PART I. . .	285
" III. WHITEHALL . . .	139	KING VICTOR. PART II. . .	291
		SECOND YEAR, 1731.—	
		KING CHARLES. PART I. . .	302
		KING CHARLES. PART II. . .	310

DRAMATIC LYRICS

	PAGE
CAVALIER TUNES—	
I. MARCHING ALONG .	319
II. GIVE A ROUSE .	319
III. BOOT AND SADDLE	320
MY LAST DUCHESS .	321
COUNT GISMOND .	323
INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP .	326
SOLILOQUY OF THE SPAN- ISH CLOISTER .	327
IN A GONDOLA .	328
ARTEMIS PROLOGUIZES .	332
WARING .	335
RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI .	339
CRISTINA .	340
MADHOUSE CELL—	
I. JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION .	341
II. PORPHYRIA'S LOVER .	342
THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR .	343
THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN .	344
"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX" .	349
PICTOR IGNOTUS .	351
THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND	353
THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY .	355
THE LOST LEADER .	359
THE LOST MISTRESS .	360
HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD .	361
HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA .	361
THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH .	362

DRAMATIC LYRICS—*Con-
tinued.*

	PAGE
GARDEN-FANCIES—	
I. THE FLOWER'S NAME	365
II. SIBRANDUS SCHAFFNA- BURGENSIS .	366
THE LABORATORY .	368
THE CONFESSIONAL .	370
THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS .	372
EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES .	387
SONG .	387
THE BOY AND THE ANGEL	388
MEETING AT NIGHT .	390
PARTING AT MORNING .	390
SAUL .	391
TIME'S REVENGES .	394
THE GLOVE .	395
NATIONALITY IN DRINKS .	399
THE TWINS .	400

THE RETURN OF THE
DRUSES: A TRAGEDY—

ACT I .	401
" II. .	408
" III. .	415
" IV. .	421
" V. .	428

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUT-
CHEON: A TRAGEDY—

ACT I.	
SCENE I. THE INTERIOR OF A LODGE IN LORD TRES- HAM'S PARK .	436
" II. A SALOON IN THE MANSION .	438
" III. MILDRED'S CHAMBER .	441

CONTENTS

xi

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUT- CHEON: A TRAGEDY—

Continued.

ACT II.

SCENE. THE LIBRARY . . . 446

ACT III.

SCENE I. THE END OF THE
YEW-TREE
AVENUE UN-
DER MILDRED'S
WINDOW . . . 454

" II. MILDRED'S
CHAMBER . . . 459

COLOMBI'S BIRTHDAY: A PLAY—

ACT I. MORNING.

SCENE. A CORRIDOR LEAD-
ING TO THE
AUDIENCE-CHAM-
BER . . . 465

ACT II. NOON.

SCENE. THE PRESENCE-
CHAMBER . . . 472

ACT III. AFTERNOON.

SCENE. THE VESTIBULE . . . 479

ACT IV. EVENING.

SCENE. AN ANTECHAMBER . . . 486

ACT V. NIGHT.

SCENE. THE HALL . . . 494

LURIA: A TRAGEDY—

ACT I. MORNING . . . 504

" II. NOON . . . 511

" III. AFTERNOON . . . 518

" IV. EVENING . . . 525

" V. NIGHT . . . 531

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY -

PART I. 538

" II. 546

CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY: A POEM -

CHRISTMAS-EVE . . . 555

EASTER-DAY . . . 574

MEN AND WOMEN

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS. 588

A LOVER'S QUARREL . . . 589

EVELYN HOPE . . . 591

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN

THE CITY . . . 592

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD. 594

FRA LIPPO LIPPI . . . 594

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S 602

BY THE FIRE-SIDE . . . 603

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUS-

BAND . . . 603

AN EPISTLE . . . 611

MESMERISM . . . 616

A SERENADE AT THE VILLA 618

MY STAR . . . 619

INSTANS TYRANNUS . . . 619

A PRETTY WOMAN . . . 620

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE

DARK TOWER CAME" 621

RESPECTABILITY . . . 626

A LIGHT WOMAN . . . 626

THE STATUE AND THE

BUST . . . 627

LOVE IN A LIFE . . . 632

LIFE IN A LOVE . . . 632

HOW IT STRIKES A CON-

TEMPORARY . . . 632

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER 634

THE PATRIOT . . . 636

MASTER HUGUES OF SAXE-

GOtha . . . 637

MEN AND WOMEN — *Continued.*

	PAGE
BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY	640
MEMORABILIA	657
ANDREA DEL SARTO	658
BEFORE	663
AFTER	664
IN THREE DAYS	664
IN A YEAR	664
OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE	666
IN A BALCONY	671
SAUL	691
"DE GUSTIBUS—"	698
WOMEN AND ROSES	699
PROTUS	702
HOLY-CROSS DAY	701
THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL	704
CLEON	705
POPULARITY	711
THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY	712
TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA	714
A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL	715
ONE WAY OF LOVE	717
ANOTHER WAY OF LOVE	718
"TRANSCENDENTALISM"	718
MISCONCEPTIONS	719
ONE WORD MORE	719
BEN KARSHOOK'S WISDOM	724

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ—

JAMES LEE'S WIFE—	
I. JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW	725
II. BY THE FIRESIDE	725

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ—
Continued.

III. IN THE DOORWAY	725
IV. ALONG THE BEACH	725
V. ON THE CLIFF	725
VI. READING A BOOK, UNDER THE CLIFF	725
VII. AMONG THE ROCKS	725
VIII. BESIDE THE DRAWING BOARD	725
IX. ON DECK	725
GOLD HAIR: A STORY OF PORNIC	725
THE WORST OF IT	725
DIS ALITER VISUM; OR, LE BYRON DE NOS JOURS	725
TOO LATE	74
ART VOGLER	74
RABBI BEN EZRA	74
A DEATH IN THE DESERT	75
CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS; OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND	76
CONFESSIONS	76
MAY AND DEATH	76
DEAF AND DUMB: A GROUP BY WOOLNER	77
PROSPICE	77
EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS: A PICTURE BY LEIGHTON	77
YOUTH AND ART	77
A FACE	77
A LIKENESS	77
MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDICUM"	77
APPARENT FAILURE	80
EPILOGUE	80

AE--

PAGE
VAV . 725
EACH 726
 . 727
BOOK,
LIFE 727
OCKS 729
RAW-
 . 729
 . 731
Y OF
 . 732
 . 735
OR,
NOS
 . 738
 . 741
 . 744
 . 746
ERT 750
BOS:
HEO-
AND 763
 . 768
 . 769
A
NER 770
 . 770
S: A
TON 770
 . 770
 . 772
 . 772
ME-
 . 773
 . 802
 . 803

PAULINE

A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été,
Et ne le sçaurois jamais être.

—MAROT.

Non dubito, quin titulus libri nostri raritate suâ quamplurimos alliciat ad legendum : inter quos nonnulli obliquæ opinionis, mente languidi, multi etiam maligni, et in ingenium nostrum ingrati accedent, qui temerariâ suâ ignorantia, vix conspecto titulo clamabunt : Nos vetita docere, heresium semina jacere : piis auribus offenculo, præclari ingenii scandalo esse : . . . ad ò conscientia suæ consulentes, ut nec Apollo, nec Musæ omnes, neque Angelus de celo me ab illorum execratione vindicare queant : quibus et ego nunc consulo, ne scripta nostra legant, nec intelligant, nec meminerint : nam noxia sunt, venenosa sunt : Acherontis ostium est in hoc libro, lapides loquitur, caveant, ne cerebrum illis excutiat. Vos autem, qui æquâ mente ad legendum venitis, si tantam prudentiæ discretionem adhibueritis, quantam in melle legendo apes, jam securi legite. Puto namque vos et utilitatis haud parùm et voluptatis plurimùm accepturos. Quod si qua repperitis, quæ vobis non placeant, mittite illa, nec utimini. **NAM ET EGO VOBIS ILLA NON PROBO, SED NARRO.** Cætera tamen propterea non respuite. . . . Ideo, si quid liberius dictum sit, ignoscite adolescenti nostræ, qui minor quam adolescens hoc opus composui.—
H. Cor. Agrippa, De Occult. Phil.

LONDON, *January 1833.*
V.A. XX.

PAULINE

A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION

PAULINE, mine own, bend o'er me—
thy soft breast
Shall pant to mine—bend o'er me—
thy sweet eyes,
And loosened hair, and breathing lips,
and arms
Drawing me to thee—these build up
a screen
To shut me in with thee, and from all
fear,
So that I might unlock the sleepless
brood
Of fancies from my soul, their lurking
place,
Nor doubt that each would pass, ne'er
to return
To one so watched, so loved, and so
secured.
But what can guard thee but thy
naked love?
Ah, dearest! whoso sucks a poisoned
wound
Envenoms his own veins,—thou art
so good,
So calm—if thou should'st wear a
brow less light
For some wild thought which, but for
me, were kept
From out thy soul, as from a sacred
star.
Yet till I have unlocked them it were
vain
To hope to sing; some woe would
light on me;
Nature would point at one, whose
quivering lip
Was bathed in her enchantments—
whose brow burned
Beneath the crown, to which her
secrets knelt;

Who learned the spell which can call
up the dead,
And then departed, smiling like a fiend
Who has deceived God. If such one
should seek
Again her altars, and stand robed and
crowned
Amid the faithful: sad confession first,
Remorse and pardon, and old claims
renewed,
Ere I can be—as I shall be no more.
I had been spared this shame, if I had
sate
By thee for ever, from the first, in
place
Of my wild dreams of beauty and of
good,
Or with them, as an earnest of their
truth.
No thought nor hope, having been
shut from thee,
No vague wish unexplained—no wandering
aim
Sent back to bind on Fancy's wings,
and seek
Some strange fair world, where it
might be a law;
But doubting nothing, had been led
by thee,
Thro' youth, and saved, as one at
length awaked,
Who has slept thro' a peril. Ah!
vain, vain!
Thou lovest me—the past is in its
grave,
Tho' its ghost haunts us—still this
much is ours,
To cast away restraint, lest a worse
thing

Wait for us in the darkness. Thou
 lovest me,
 And thou art to receive not love, but
 faith,
 For which thou wilt be mine, and
 smile, and take
 All shapes, and shames, and veil
 without a fear
 That form which music follows like a
 slave;
 And I look to thee, and I trust in thee,
 As in a Northern night one looks
 always
 Unto the East for morn, and spring
 and joy.
 Thou seest then my aimless, hopeless
 state,
 And resting on some few old feelings,
 won
 Back by thy beauty, would'st that I
 essay
 The task, which was to me what now
 thou art:
 And why should I conceal one weak-
 ness more?

 Thou wilt remember one warm morn,
 when Winter
 Crept aged from the earth, and
 Spring's first breath
 Blew soft from the moist hills—the
 black-thorn boughs,
 So dark in the bare wood; when
 glistening
 In the sunshine were white with com-
 ing buds,
 Like the bright side of a sorrow—and
 the banks
 Had violets opening from sleep like
 eyes—
 I walked with thee, who knew not a
 deep shame
 Lurked beneath smiles and careless
 words, which sought
 To hide it—till they wandered and
 were mute;
 As we stood listening on a sunny
 mound
 To the wind murmuring in the damp
 copse,
 Like heavy breathings of some hidden
 thing

Betrayed by sleep—until the feeling
 rushed
 That I was low indeed, yet not so low
 As to endure the calmness of thin
 eyes;
 And so I told thee all, while the cool
 breast
 I leaned on altered not its quiet beat-
 ing;
 And long ere words, like a hurt bird's
 complaint,
 Bade me look up and be what I had
 been,
 I felt despair could never live by thee
 Thou wilt remember:—thou art not
 more dear
 Than song was once to me; and I
 ne'er sung
 But as one entering bright halls,
 where all
 Will rise and shout for him. Sure I
 must own
 That I am fallen—having chosen gifts
 Distinct from theirs—that I am sad—
 and fain
 Would give up all to be but where I
 was;
 Not high as I had been, if faithful
 found—
 But low and weak, yet full of hope,
 and sure
 Of goodness as of life—that I would
 lose
 All this gay mastery of mind, to sit
 Once more with them, trusting in
 truth and love,
 And with an aim—not being what I
 am.

 Oh, Pauline! I am ruined! who be-
 lieved
 That tho' my soul had floated from its
 sphere
 Of wide dominion into the dim orb
 Of self—that it was strong and free as
 ever:—
 It has conformed itself to that dim
 orb,
 Reflecting all its shades and shapes,
 and now
 Must stay where it alone can be
 adored.

I have felt this in dreams—in dreams
 in which
 I seemed the fate from which I
 fled; I felt
 A strange delight in causing my
 decay;
 I was a fiend, in darkness chained for
 ever
 Within some ocean-cave; and ages
 rolled,
 Till thro' the cleft rock, like a moon-
 beam, came
 A white swan to remain with me;
 and ages
 Rolled, yet I tired not of my first joy
 In gazing on the peace of its pure
 wings.
 And then I said, " 'Tis most fair to me,
 "Yet its soft wings must sure have
 suffered change
 "I rom the thick darkness—sure its
 eyes are dim—
 "Its silver pinions must be cramped
 and numbed
 "With sleeping ages here; it cannot
 leave me,
 "For it would seem, in light, beside
 its kind,
 "Withered—tho' here to me most
 beautiful."
 And then I was a young witch, whose
 blue eyes,
 As she stood naked by the river
 springs,
 Drew down a god—I watched his
 radiant form
 Growing less radiant—and it glad-
 dened me;
 Till one morn, as he sat in the sun-
 shine
 Upon my knees, singing to me of
 heaven,
 He turned to look at me, ere I could
 lose
 The grin with which I viewed his
 perishing.
 And he shrieked and departed, and
 sat long
 By his deserted throne—but sunk at
 last,
 Murmuring, as I kissed his lips and
 curled

Around him, "I am still a god—to
 thee."
 Still I can lay my soul bare in its
 fall,
 For all the wandering and all the
 weakness
 Will be a saddest comment on the
 song.
 And if, that done, I can be young
 again,
 I will give up all gained as willingly
 As one gives up a charm which shuts
 him out
 From hope, or part, or care, in human
 kind.
 As life wanes, all its cares, and strife,
 and toil,
 Seem strangely valueless, while the
 old trees
 Which grew by our youth's home—
 the waving mass
 Of climbing plants, heavy with bloom
 and dew—
 The morning swallows with their
 songs like words,—
 All these seem clear and only worth
 our thoughts.
 So aught connected with my early
 life—
 My rude songs or my wild imaginings,
 How I look on them—most distinct
 amid
 The fever and the stir of after years!

 I ne'er had ventured e'en to hope for
 this,
 Had not the glow I felt at His award,
 Assured me all was not extinct within.
 HIM whom all honour—whose renown
 springs up
 Like sunlight which will visit all the
 world;
 So that e'en they who sneered at him
 at first,
 Come out to it, as some dark spider
 crawls
 From his foul nets, which some lit
 torch invades,
 Yet spinning still new films for his
 retreat.—
 Thou didst smile,—but, can *we* for-
 give?

Sun-treader—life and light be thine
 for ever ;
 Thou art gone from us—years go by
 —and spring
 Gladdens, and the young earth is
 beautiful,
 Yet thy songs come not—other bards
 arise,
 But none like thee—they stand—thy
 majesties,
 Like mighty works which tell some
 Spirit there
 Hath sat regardless of neglect and
 scorn,
 Till, its long task completed, 't hath
 risen
 And left us, never to return : and all
 Rush in to peer and praise when all
 in vain.
 The air seems bright with thy past
 presence yet,
 But thou art still for me, as thou hast
 been
 When I have stood with thee, as on a
 throne
 With all thy dim creations gathered
 round
 Like mountains,—and I felt of mould
 like them,
 And creatures of my own were mixed
 with them,
 Like things half-lived, catching and
 giving life.
 But thou art still for me, who have
 adored,
 Tho' single, panting but to hear thy
 name,
 Which I believed a spell to me alone,
 Scarce deeming thou wert as a star to
 men—
 As one should worship long a sacred
 spring
 Scarce worth a moth's flitting, which
 long grasses cross,
 And one small tree embowers droop-
 ingly,
 Joying to see some wandering insect
 won,
 To live in its few rushes—or some
 locust
 To pasture on its boughs—or some
 wild bird

Stoop for its freshness from the track-
 less air,
 And then should find it but the
 fountain-head,
 Long lost, of some great river—wash-
 ing towns
 And towers, and seeing old woods
 which will live
 But by its banks, untrod of human
 foot,
 Which, when the great sun sinks, lie
 quivering
 In light as some thing lieth half of life
 Before God's foot—waiting a won-
 drous change
 —Then girt with rocks which seek to
 turn or stay
 Its course in vain, for it does ever
 spread
 Like a sea's arm as it goes rolling on,
 Being the pulse of some great coun-
 try—so
 Wert thou to me—and art thou to the
 world.
 And I, perchance, half feel a strange
 regret,
 That I am not what I have been to
 thee :
 Like a girl one has loved long silently,
 In her first loveliness, in some retreat,
 When first emerged, all gaze and glow
 to view
 Her fresh eyes, and soft hair, and lips
 which bleed
 Like a mountain berry. Doubtless it
 is sweet
 To see her thus adored—but there
 have been
 Moments, when all the world was in
 his praise,
 Sweeter than all the pride of after
 hours.
 Yet, Sun-treader, all hail !—from my
 heart's heart
 I bid thee hail !—e'en in my wildest
 dreams,
 I am proud to feel I would have
 thrown up all
 The wreaths of fame which seemed
 o'erhanging me,
 To have seen thee, for a moment, as
 thou art.

And if thou livest—if thou lovest,
spirit!

Remember me, who set this final seal
To wandering thought—that one so
pure as thou

Could never die. Remember me,
who flung

All honour from my soul—yet paused
and said,

“There is one spark of love remain-
ing yet,

“For I have nought in common with
him—shapes

“Which followed him avoid me, and
foul forms

“Seek me, which ne’er could fasten
on his mind;

“And tho’ I feel how low I am to him,

“Yet I aim not even to catch a tone

“Of all the harmonies he called up,
“So one gleam still remains, altho’
the last.”

Remember me—who praise thee e’en
with tears,

For never more shall I walk calm
with thee;

Thy sweet imaginings are as an air,
A melody, some wond’rous singersings,
Which, though it haunt men oft in
the still eve,

They dream not to essay; yet it no
less,

But more is honoured. I was thine in
shame,

And now when all thy proud renown
is out,

I am a watcher, whose eyes have
grown dim

With looking for some star—which
breaks on him,

Altered, and worn, and weak, and
full of tears.

Autumn has come—like Spring re-
turned to us

Won from her girlishness—like one
returned

A friend that was a lover—nor forgets
The first warm love, but full of sober
thoughts

Of fading years; whose soft mouth
quivers yet

With the old smile—but yet so
changed and still!

And here am I the scoffer, who have
probed

Life’s vanity, won by a word again
Into my old life—for one little word
Of this sweet friend, who lives in
loving me,

Lives strangely on my thoughts, and
looks, and words,

As fathoms down some nameless ocean
thing

Its silent course of quietness and joy.

O dearest, if, indeed, I tell the past,
May’st thou forget it as a sad sick
dream;

Or if it linger—my lost soul too soon
Sinks to itself, and whispers, we shall
be

But closer linked—two creatures
whom the earth

Bears singly—with strange feelings,
unrevealed

But to each other; or two lonely
things

Created by some Power, whose reign
is done,

Having no part in God, or His bright
world,

I am to sing; whilst ebbing day dies
soft,

As a lean scholar dies, worn o’er his
book,

And in the heaven stars steal out one
by one,

As hunted men steal to their mountain
watch.

I must not think—lest this new im-
pulse die

In which I trust. I have no confi-
dence,

So I will sing on—fast as fancies come
Rudely—the verse being as the mood
it paints.

I strip my mind bare—whose first
elements

I shall unveil—not as they struggled
forth

In infancy, nor as they now exist,
That I am grown above them, and

can rule them,

But in that middle stage, when they
 were full,
 Yet ere I had disposed them to my
 will;
 And then I shall show how these ele-
 ments
 Produced my present state, and what
 it is.
 I am made up of an intensest life,
 Of a most clear idea of consciousness
 Of self—distinct from all its qualities,
 From all affections, passions, feelings,
 powers;
 And thus far it exists, if tracked in all,
 But linked in me, to self-supremacy,
 Existing as a centre to all things,
 Most potent to create, and rule, and
 call
 Upon all things to minister to it;
 And to a principle of restlessness
 Which would be all, have, see, know,
 taste, feel, all—
 This is myself; and I should thus
 have been,
 Though gifted lower than the meanest
 soul.
 And of my powers, one springs up to
 save
 From utter death a soul with such
 desires
 Confined to clay—which is the only
 one
 Which marks me—an imagination
 which
 Has been an angel to me—coming
 not
 In fitful visions, but beside me ever,
 And never failing me; so tho' my
 mind
 Forgets not—not a shred of life for-
 gets—
 Yet I can take a secret pride in calling
 The dark past up—to quell it regally.
 A mind like this must dissipate itself,
 But I have always had one lode-star;
 now,
 As I look back, I see that I have
 wasted,
 Or progressed as I looked toward
 that star—

A need, a trust, a yearning after God
 A feeling I have analysed but late,
 But it existed, and was reconciled
 With a neglect of all I deemed His
 laws,
 Which yet, when seen in others, I
 abhorred.
 I felt as one beloved, and so shut in
 From fear—and thence I date my
 trust in signs
 And omens—for I saw God every-
 where;
 And I can only lay it to the fruit
 Of a sad after-time that I could doubt
 Even His being—having always felt
 His presence—never acting from my-
 self,
 Still trusting in a hand that leads me
 through
 All danger; and this feeling still has
 fought
 Against my weakest reason and
 resolves.
 And I can love nothing—and this
 dull truth
 Has come the last—but sense supplies
 a love
 Encircling me and mingling with my
 life.
 These make myself—I have sought
 in vain
 To trace how they were formed by
 circumstance,
 For I still find them—turning my
 wild youth
 Where they alone displayed them-
 selves, converting
 All objects to their use—now see their
 course!
 They came to me in my first dawn of
 life,
 Which passed alone with wisest
 ancient books,
 All halo-girt with fancies of my own,
 And I myself went with the tale—a
 god,
 Wandering after beauty—for a giant,
 Standing vast in the sunset—an old
 hunter,

<p>Talking with gods—or a high-crested chief, Sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos ;— I tell you, nought has ever been so clear As the place, the time, the fashion of those lives. I had not seen a work of lofty art, Nor woman's beauty, nor sweet nature's face, Yet, I say, never morn broke clear as those On the dim clustered isles in the blue sea : The deep groves, and white temples, and wet caves— And nothing ever will surprise me now— Who stood beside the naked Swift- footed, Who bound my forehead with Proser- pine's hair.</p> <p>An' strange it is, that I who could so dream, Should e'er have stooped to aim at aught beneath— Aught low, or painful, but I never doubted ; So as I grew, I rudely shaped my life To my immediate wants, yet strong beneath Was a vague sense of powers folded up— A sense that tho' those shadowy times were past, Their spirit dwelt in me, and I should rule.</p> <p>Then came a pause, and long restraint chained down My soul, till it was changed. I lost myself, And were it not that I so loathe that time, I could recall how first I learned to turn My mind against itself; and the effects, In deeds for which remorse were vain, as for The wanderings of delirious dream ; yet thence</p>	<p>Came cunning, envy, falsehood, which so long Have spotted me— at length I was restored, Yet long the influence remained ; and nought But the still life I led, apart from all, Which left my soul to seek its old delights, Could e'er have brought me thus far back to peace. As peace returned, I sought out some pursuit : And song rose—no new impulse—but the one With which all others best could be combined. My life has not been that of those whose heaven Was lampless, save where poesy shone out ; But as a clime where glittering mountain-tops And glancing sea and forests steeped in light Give back reflected the far-flashing sun ; For music, (which is earnest of a heaven, Seeing we know emotions strange by it, Not else to be revealed,) is as a voice, A low voice calling Fancy, as a friend, To the green woods in the gay summer time. And she fills all the way with danc- ing shapes, Which have made painters pale ; and they go on While stars look at them, and winds call to them, As they leave life's path for the twi- light world, Where the dead gather. This was not at first, For I scarce knew what I would do. I had No wish to paint, no yearning—but I sang.</p> <p>And first I sang, as I in dream have seen Music wait on a lyrist for some thought,</p>
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Yet singing to herself until it came.
 I turned to those old times and scenes,
 where all
 That's beautiful had birth for me,
 and made
 Rude verses on them all; and then I
 paused—
 I had done nothing, so I sought to
 know
 What mind had yet achieved. No
 fear was mine
 As I gazed on the works of mighty
 bards,
 In the first joy at finding my own
 thoughts
 Recorded, and my powers exemplified,
 And feeling their aspirings were my
 own.
 And then I first explored passion and
 mind;
 And I began afresh; I rather sought
 To rival what I wondered at, than
 form
 Creations of my own; so much was
 light
 Lent back by others, yet much was
 my own.

 I paused again—a change was com-
 ing on,
 I was no more a boy—the past was
 breaking
 Before the coming, and like fever
 worked.
 I first thought on myself—and here
 my powers
 Burst out. I dreamed not of re-
 straint, but gazed
 On all things: schemes and systems
 went and came,
 And I was proud (being vainest of
 the weak)
 In wandering o'er them, to seek out
 some one
 To be my own; as one should
 wander o'er
 The white way for a star.

 On one, whom praise of mine would
 not offend,
 Who was as calm as beauty—being
 such

Unto mankind as thou to me, Pauline,
 Believing in them, and devoting all
 His soul's strength to their winning
 back to peace;
 Who sent forth hopes and longings
 for their sake,
 Clothed in all passion's melodies,
 which first
 Caught me, and set me, as to a sweet
 task,
 To gather every breathing of his songs.
 And woven with them there were
 words which seemed
 A key to a new world; the muttering
 Of angels, of some thing unguessed by
 man.
 How my heart beat, as I went on,
 and found
 Much there! I felt my own mind had
 conceived,
 But there living and burning; soon
 the whole
 Of his conceptions dawned on me;
 their praise
 Is in the tongues of men; men's
 brows are high
 When his name means a triumph and
 a pride;
 So my weak hands may well forbear
 to dim
 What then seemed my bright fate: I
 threw myself
 To meet it. I was vowed to liberty,
 Men were to be as gods, and earth as
 heaven.
 And I—ah! what a life was mine to be,
 My whole soul rose to meet it. Now,
 Pauline,
 I shall go mad, if I recall that time.

 O let me look back, e'er I leave for
 ever
 The time, which was an hour, that
 one waits
 For a fair girl, that comes a withered
 hag.
 And I was lonely,—far from woods
 and fields,
 And amid dullest sights, who should
 be loose
 As a stag—yet I was full of joy—who
 lived

With Plato—and who had the key to life.

And I had dimly shaped my first attempt,

And many a thought did I build up on thought,

As the wild bee hangs cell to cell—in vain ;

For I must still go on : my mind rests not.

'Twas in my plan to look on real life, Which was all new to me ; my theories Were firm, so I left them, to look upon Men, and their cares, and hopes, and fears, and joys ;

And, as I pondered on them all, I sought

How best life's end might be attained —an end

Comprising every joy. I deeply mused.

And suddenly, without heart-wreck, I awoke

As from a dream—I said, 'twas beautiful,

Yet but a dream : and so adieu to it. As some world-wanderer sees in a far meadow

Strange towers, and walled gardens, dick with trees,

Where singing goes on, and delicious mirth,

And laughing fairy creatures peeping over,

And on the morrow, when he comes to live

For ever by those springs, and trees, fruit-flushed

And fairy bowers—all his search is vain. Well I remember . . .

First went my hopes of perfecting mankind,

And faith in them—then freedom in itself,

And virtue in itself—and then my motives' ends,

And powers and loves ; and human love went last.

I felt this no decay, because new powers Rose as old feelings left—wit, mockery,

And happiness ; for I had oft been sad,

Mistrusting my resolves : but now I cast

Hope joyously away—I laughed and said,

"No more of this"—I must not think ; at length

I look'd again to see how all went on.

My powers were greater—as some temple seemed

My soul, where nought is changed, and incense rolls

Around the altar—only God is gone, And some dark spirit sitteth in His seat !

So I passed through the temple ; and to me

Knelt troops of shadows ; and they cried, "Hail, king !

"We serve thee now, and thou shalt serve no more !

"Call on us, prove us, let us worship thee !"

And I said, "Are ye strong—let fancy bear me

"Far from the past."—And I was borne away

As Arab birds float sleeping in the wind, O'er deserts, towers, and forests, I being calm ;

And I said, "I have nursed up energies, "They will prey on me." And a band knelt low,

And cried, "Lord, we are here, and we will make

"A way for thee—in thine appointed life

"O look on us !" And I said, "Ye will worship

"Me ; but my heart must worship too." They shouted,

"Thyself—thou art our king !" So I stood there

Smiling * * * * *

And buoyant and rejoicing was the spirit

With which I looked out how to end my days ;

I felt once more myself—my powers were mine ;

I found that youth or health so lifted me,

That, spite of all life's vanity, no grief
 Came nigh me—I must ever be light-
 hearted ;
 And that this feeling was the only veil
 Betwixt me and despair : so if age
 came,
 I should be as a wreck linked to a soul
 Yet fluttering, or mind-broken, and
 aware
 Of my decay. So a long summer morn
 Found me ; and e'er noon came, I
 had resolved
 No age should come on me, ere youth's
 hopes went,
 For I would wear myself out—like
 that morn
 Which wasted not a sunbeam—every
 joy
 I would make mine, and die ; and
 thus I sought
 To chain my spirit down, which I had
 fed
 With thoughts of fame. I said, the
 troubled life
 Of genius seen so bright when work-
 ing forth
 Some trusted end, seems sad, when
 all in vain—
 Most sad, when men have parted with
 all joy
 For their wild fancy's sake, which
 waited first,
 As an obedient spirit, when delight
 Came not with her alone, but alters
 soon,
 Coming darkened, seldom, hasting to
 depart,
 Leaving a heavy darkness and warm
 tears.
 But I shall never lose her ; she will
 live
 Brighter for such seclusion—I but
 catch
 A hue, a glance of what I sing ; so
 pain
 Is linked with pleasure, for I ne'er
 may tell
 The radiant sights which dazzle me ;
 but now
 They shall be all my own, and let
 them fade

Untold—others shall rise as fair, as fast.
 And when all's done, the few dim
 gleams transferred,—
 (For a new thought sprung up—that
 it were well
 To leave all shadowy hopes, and weave
 such lays
 As would encircle me with praise and
 love ;
 So I should not die utterly I should
 bring
 One branch from the gold forest, like
 the knight
 Of old tales, witnessing I had been
 there,)
 And when all's done, how vain seems
 e'en success,
 And all the influence poets have o'er
 men !
 'Tis a fine thing that one, weak as
 myself,
 Should sit in his lone room, knowing
 the words
 He utters in his solitude shall move
 Men like a swift wind that tho' he
 be forgotten,
 Fair eyes shall glisten when his
 beauteous dreams
 Of love come true in happier frames
 than his.
 Ay, the still night brought thoughts
 like these, but morn
 Came, and the mockery again laughed
 out
 At hollow praises, and smiles, almost
 sneers ;
 And my soul's idol seemed to whisper
 me
 To dwell with him and his unhonoured
 name—
 And I well knew my spirit, that would
 be
 First in the struggle, and again would
 make
 All bow to it ; and I would sink again
 And then know that this curse will
 come on us,
 To see our idols perish—we may
 wither,
 Nor marvel—we are clay ; but our
 low fate

Should not extend them, whom trust-
ingly

We sent before into Time's yawning
gulf,

To face what e'er may lurk in dark-
ness there—

To see the painters' glory pass, and feel
Sweet music move us not as once, or
worst,

To see decaying wits ere the frail body
Decays. Nought makes me trust in
love so really,

As the delight of the contented low-
ness

With which I gaze on souls I'd keep
for ever

In beauty—I'd be sad to equal them;
I'd feed their fame e'en from my heart's
best blood,

Withering unseen, that they might
flourish still.

Pauline, my sweet friend, thou dost
not forget

How this mood swayed me, when
thou first wert mine,

When I had set myself to live this life,
Defying all opinion, Ere thou camest
I was most happy, sweet, for old
delights

Had come like birds again; music,
my life,

I nourished more than ever, and old
lore

Loved for itself, and all it shows—the
king

Treading the purple calmly to his
death,

—While round him, like the clouds of
eve, all dusk,

The giant shades of fate, silently flitting,
Pile the dim outline of the coming
doom,

—And him sitting alone in blood, while
friends

Are hunting far in the sunshine; and
the boy,

With his white breast and brow and
clustering curls

Streaked with his mother's blood, and
striving hard

To tell his story ere his reason goes.

And when I loved thee, as I've loved
so oft,

Thou lovedst me, and I wondered,
and looked in

My heart to find some feeling like
such love,

Believing I was still what I had been;
And soon I found all faith had gone
from me,

And the late glow of life—changing
like clouds,

'Twas not the morn-blush widening
into day,

But evening, coloured by the dying
sun

While darkness is quick hastening:—
I will tell

My state as though 'twere none of
mine—despair

Cannot come near me—thus it is with
me.

Souls alter not, and mine must pro-
gress still;

And this I knew not when I flung away
My youth's chief aims. I ne'er sup-
posed the loss

Of what few I retained; for no resource
Awaits me—now behold the change
of all.

I cannot chain my soul, it will not
rest

In its clay prison; this most narrow
sphere—

It has strange powers, and feelings,
and desires,

Which I cannot account for, nor ex-
plain,

But which I stifle not, being bound
to trust

All feelings equally—to hear all sides:
Yet I cannot indulge them, and they
live,

Referring to some state or life un-
known. . . .

My selfishness is satiated not,
It wears me like a flame; my hunger
for

All pleasure, howsoe'er minute, is
pain;

I envy—how I envy him whose mind

Turns with its energies to some one
end !
To elevate a sect, or a pursuit,
However mean—so my still baffled
hopes
Seek out abstractions ; I would have
but one
Delight on earth, so it were wholly
mine ;
One rapture all my soul could fill —
and this
Wild feeling places me in dream afar,
In some wide country, where the eye
can see
No end to the far hills and dales be-
strewn
With shining towers and dwellings.
I grow mad
Well-nigh, to know not one abode but
hells
Some pleasure—for my soul could
grasp them all,
But must remain with this vile form.
I look
With hope to age at last, which
quenching much,
May let me concentrate the sparks it
spares.
This restlessness of passion meets in
me
A craving after knowledge : the sole
proof
Of a commanding will is in that power
Repressed ; for I beheld it in its
dawn,
That sleepless harpy, with its bud-
ding wings,
And I considered whether I should
yield
All hopes and fears, to live alone
with it,
Finding a recompense in its wild
eyes ;
And when I found that I should
perish so,
I bade its wild eyes close from me for
ever ;—
And I am left alone with my de-
lights,—
So it lies in me a chained thing—still
ready

To serve me, if I loose its slightest
bond
I cannot but be proud of my bright
slave.
And thus I know this earth is not my
sphere,
For I cannot so narrow me, but that
I still exceed it ; in their elements
My love would pass my reason—but
since here
Love must receive its objects from
this earth,
While reason will be chainless, the
few truths
Caught from its wanderings have
sufficed to quell
All love below ; then what must be
that love
Which, with the object it demands,
would quell
Reason, tho' it soared with the
seraphim ?
No—what I feel may pass all human
love,
Yet fall far short of what my love
should be ;
And yet I seem more warped in this
than aught
For here myself stands out more
hideously.
I can forget myself in friends or
fame,
Or liberty, or love of mighty souls.
But I begin to know what thing hate
is—
To sicken, and to quiver, and grow
white,
And I myself have furnished its first
prey.
All my sad weaknesses, this wavering
will,
This selfishness, this still decaying
frame . . .
But I must never grieve while I can
pass
Far from such thoughts—as now
—Andromeda !
And she is with me—years roll, I
shall change,

But change can touch her not—so
 beautiful
 With her dark eyes, earnest and still,
 and hair
 Lifted and spread by the salt-sweep-
 ing breeze;
 And one red-beam, all the storm
 leaves in heaven,
 Resting upon her eyes and face and
 hair
 As she awaits the snake on the wet
 beach,
 By the dark rock, and the white wave
 just breaking
 At her feet; quite naked and alone,—
 nothing
 You doubt not, nor fear for, secure
 that God
 Will come in thunder from the stars
 to save her.
 Let it pass—I will call another change.
 I will be gifted with a wondrous soul,
 Yet sunk by error to men's sympathy,
 And in the wane of life; yet only so
 As to call up their fears, and there
 shall come
 A time requiring youth's best energies;
 And strait I fling age, sorrow, sick-
 ness off,
 And I rise triumphing over my decay.
 And thus it is that I supply the chasm
 'Twixt what I am and all that I
 would be.
 But then to know nothing—to hope
 for nothing—
 To seize on life's dull joys from a
 strange fear,
 Lest, losing them, all's lost, and
 nought remains.
 There's some vile juggle with my
 reason here—
 I feel I but explain to my own loss
 These impulses—they live no less the
 same.
 Liberty! what though I despair—my
 blood
 Runs not at a slave's name prouder
 than now,
 And sympathy obscured by sophis-
 tries.

Why have not I sought refuge in my-
 self,
 But for the woes I saw and could not
 stay
 And love!—do I not love thee, my
 Pauline?
 I cherish prejudice, lest I be left
 Utterly loveless—witness this belief
 In poets, tho' sad change has come
 there too;
 No more I leave myself to follow
 them:
 Unconsciously I measure me by them.
 Let me forget it; and I cherish most
 My love of England—how her name
 —a word
 Of hers in a strange tongue makes
 my heart beat! . . .
 Pauline, I could do anything—not
 now—
 All's fever—but when calm shall come
 again—
 I am prepared—I have made life my
 own—
 I would not be content with all the
 change
 One frame should feel—but I have
 gone in thought
 Thro' all conjuncture—I have lived
 all life
 When it is most alive—where strangest
 fate
 New shapes it past surmise—the tales
 of men
 Bit by some curse—or in the grasps
 of doom
 Half-visible and still increasing round,
 Or crowning their wide being's general
 aim. . . .
 These are wild fancies, but I feel,
 sweet friend,
 As one breathing his weakness to the
 ear
 Of pitying angel—dear as a winter
 flower;
 A slight flower growing alone, and
 offering
 Its frail cup of three leaves to the
 cold sun,

Yet joyous and confiding, like the
triumph
Of a child—and why am I not worthy
thee?
.

I can live all the life of plants, and
gaze
Drowsily on the bees that flit and
play,
Or bare my breast for sunbeams which
will kill,
Or open in the night of sounds, to
look
For the dim stars; I can mount with
the bird,
Leaping airily his pyramid of leaves
And twisted boughs of some tall
mountain tree,
Or rise cheerfully springing to the
heavens—
Or like a fish breathe in the morning
air
In the misty sun-warm water—or
with flowers
And trees can smile in light at the
sinking sun,
Just as the storm comes—as a girl
would look
On a departing lover—most serene.

Pauline, come with me—see how I
could build
A home for us, out of the world; in
thought—
I am inspired—come with me,
Pauline!

Night, and one single ridge of narrow
path
Between the sullen river and the
woods
Waving and muttering—for the moon-
less night
Has shaped them into images of life,
Like the upraising of the giant-ghosts,
Looking on earth to know how their
sons fare.
Thou art so close by me, the roughest
swell
Of wind in the tree-tops hides not the
panting

Of thy soft breasts; no—we will pass
to morning—
Morning—the rocks, and valleys, and
old woods.
How the sun brightens in the mist,
and here,—
Half in the air, like creatures of the
place,
Trusting the element—living on high
boughs
That swing in the wind—look at the
golden spray,
Flung from the foam-sheet of the
cataract,
Amid the broken rocks—shall we stay
here
With the wild hawks?—no, ere the
hot noon come
Dive we down—safe;—see this our
new retreat
Walled in with a sloped mound of
matted shrubs,
Dark, tangled, old and green—still
sloping down
To a small pool whose waters lie asleep
Amid the trailing boughs turned water-
plants
And tall trees over-arch to keep us in,
Breaking the sunbeams into emerald
shafts,
And in the dreamy water one small
group
Of two or three strange trees are got
together,
Wondering at all around—as strange
beasts herd
Together far from their own land—
all wildness—
No turf nor moss, for boughs and
plants pave all
And tongues of bank go shelving in
the waters,
Where the pale-throated snake re-
clines his head,
And old grey stones lie making eddies
there;
The wild mice cross them dry-shod—
deeper in—
Shut thy soft eyes—now look—still
deeper in:
This is the very heart of the woods—
all round,

Mountain-like, heaped above us ; yet
 even here
 One pond of water gleams—far off
 the river
 Sweeps like a sea, barred out from
 land ; but one—
 One thin clear sheet has over-leaped
 and wound
 Into this silent depth, which gained,
 it lies
 Still, as but let by sufferance ; th
 trees bend
 O'er it as wild men watch a sleeping
 girl,
 And thro' their roots long creeping
 plants stretch out
 Their twined hair, steeped and spark-
 ling ; farther on,
 Tall rushes and thick flag-knots have
 combined
 To narrow it ; so, at length, a silver
 thread
 It winds, all noiselessly, thro' the
 deep wood,
 Till thro' a cleft way, thro' the moss
 and stone,
 It joins its parent river with a shout.
 Up for the glowing day—leave the old
 woods :
 See, they part, like a ruined arch, the
 sky !
 Nothing but sky appears, so close the
 root
 And grass of the hill-top level with
 the air—
 Blue sunny air, where a great cloud
 floats, laden
 With light, like a dead whale that
 white birds pick,
 Floating away in the sun in some
 north sea.
 Air, air—fresh life-blood—thin and
 searching air—
 The clear, dear breath of God, that
 loveth us :
 Where small birds reel and winds take
 their delight.
 Water is beautiful, but not like air.
 See, where the solid azure waters
 lie.
 Made as of thickened air, and down
 below,

The fern-ranks, like a forest spread
 themselves,
 As tho' each pore could feel the
 element ;
 Where the quick glancing serpent
 winds his way—
 Float with me there, Pauline, but not
 like air.

Down the hill—stop—a clump of trees,
 see, set
 On a heap of rocks, which look o'er
 the far plains,
 And envious climbing shrubs would
 mount to rest,
 And peer from their spread boughs.
 There they wave, looking
 At the muleteers, who whistle as they
 go
 To the merry chime of their morning
 bells, and all
 The little smoking cots, and fields, and
 banks,
 And copses, bright in the sun ; my
 spirit wanders.
 Hedge-rows for me—still, living,
 hedge-rows, where
 The bushes close, and clasp above,
 and keep
 Thought in—I am concentrated—I
 feel ;—
 But my soul saddens when it looks
 beyond ;
 I cannot be immortal, nor taste all.
 O God ! where does this tend—these
 struggling aims ? *

* Je crains bien que mon pauvre ami
 ne soit pas toujours parfaitement com-
 pris dans ce qui reste à lire de cet
 étrange fragment—mais il est moins
 propre que tout autre à éclaircir ce qui
 de sa nature ne peut jamais être que
 songe et confusion. D'ailleurs je ne
 sais trop si en cherchant à mieux co-
 ordonner certaines parties l'on ne cour-
 rait pas le risque de nuire au seul
 mérite auquel une production si singu-
 lière peut prétendre—celui de donner
 une idée assez précise du genre qu'elle
 n'a fait que ébaucher.—Ce début sans
 prétention, ce remuement des passions

What would I have? what is this
 "sleep," which seems
 To bound all? can there be a "waking"
 point
 Of crowning life? The soul would
 never rule—
 It would be first in all things—it
 would have
 Its utmost pleasure filled,—but that
 complete
 Commanding for commanding sickens
 it.
 The last point that I can trace is, rest
 beneath
 Some better essence than itself—in
 weakness;

qui va d'abord en accroissant et puis
 s'appaise par degrés, ces élans de l'âme.
 ce retour soudain sur soi-même.—Et
 par-dessus tout, la tournure d'esprit
 toute particulière de mon ami rendent
 les changements presque impossibles.
 Les notions qu'il fut valoir ailleurs, et
 d'autre encore plus puissantes, ont fait
 traverser grâce à mes yeux pour cet écrit
 qu'autrement je lui eusse conseillé de
 jeter au feu. Je n'en crois pas moins
 au grand principe de toute composition
 —à ce principe de Shakespeare, de Raf-
 faëlle, de Beethoven, d'où il suit que la
 concentration des idées est d'le bien
 plus à leur conception, qu'à leur mise
 en execution . . . j'ai tout lieu de
 craindre que la première de ces qualités
 ne soit encore étrangère à mon ami—
 et je doute fort qu'un redoublement de
 travail lui fasse acquiescer la seconde.
 Le mieux serait de bruler ceci; mais
 que faire?

Je crois que dans ce qui suit il fait
 allusion à un certain examen qu'il fit
 autrefois de l'âme ou plutôt de son
 âme, pour découvrir la suite des objets
 auxquels il lui serait possible d'attendre,
 et dont chacun une fois obtenu devait
 former une espèce de plateau d'où l'on
 pouvait apercevoir d'autres buts, d'autres
 projets, d'autres jouissances qui, à leur
 tour, devaient être surmontés. Il en ré-
 sultait que l'oubli et le sommeil devaient
 tout terminer. Cette idée que je ne
 saisis pas parfaitement lui est peut-être
 aussi intelligible qu'à moi.

PAULINE.

This is "myself"—not what I think
 should be,
 And what is that I hunger for but God?

My God, my God! let me for once
 look on thee
 As tho' nought else existed: we alone.
 And as creation crumbles, my soul's
 spark
 Expands till I can say, "Even from
 myself
 "I need thee, and I feel thee, and I
 love thee;
 "I do not plead my rapture in thy works
 "For love of thee—or that I feel as one
 "Who cannot die—but there is that
 in me
 "Which turns to thee, which loves,
 or which should love."

Why have I girt myself with this hell-
 dress?

Why have I laboured to put out my life?
 Is it not in my nature to adore.

And e'en for all my reason do I not
 Feel him, and thank him, and pray to
 him?—*None.*

Can I forego the trust that he loves me?
 Do I not feel a love which only

ONE . . .
 O thou pale form, so dimly seen, deep-
 eyed,

I have denied thee calmly—do I not
 Pant when I read of thy consummate
 deeds.

And burn to see thy calm, pure truths
 out-flash

The brightest gleams of earth's philo-
 sophy?

Do I not shake to hear aught question
 thee? . . .

If I am erring save me, madden me,
 Take from me powers, and pleasures
 let me die

Ages, so I see thee: I am knit round
 As with a charm, by sin and lust and
 pride,

Yet tho' my wandering dreams have
 seen all shapes

Of strange delight, oft have I stood
 by thee—

Have I been keeping lonely watch
with thee,
In the damp night by weepin Olivet,
Or leaning on thy bosom, proudly less—
Or dying with thee on the lonely
cross—
Or witnessing thy bursting from the
tomb!

A mortal, sin's familiar friend doth here
Avow that he will give all earth's re-
ward,
But to believe and humbly teach the
faith,
In suffering, and poverty, and shame,
Only believing he is not unloved. . . .

And now, my Pauline, I am thine for
ever!
I feel the spirit which has buoyed me up
Deserting me: and old shades gather-
ing on;
Yet while its last light waits, I would
say much,
And chiefly, I am glad that I have said
That love which I have ever felt for
thee,
But seldom told; our hearts so beat
together,
That speech is mockery, but when
dark hours come;
And I feel sad; and thou, sweet,
deem'st it strange;
A sorrow moves me, thou canst not
remove.
Look on this lay I dedicate to thee,
Which thro' thee I began, and which
I end,
Collecting the last gleams to strive to
tell
That I am thine, and more than ever
now—
That I am sinking fast—yet tho' I sink,
No less I feel that thou hast brought
me bliss,
And that I still may hope to win it back.
Thou know'st, dear friend, I could
not think all calm,
For wild dreams followed me, and
bore me off,
And all was indistinct. Ere one was
caught

Another glanced: so dazzled by my
wealth,
Knowing not which to leave nor
which to choose,
For all my thoughts so floated, nought
was fixed—
And then thou said'st a perfect bard
was one
Who shadowed out the stages of all life,
And so thou badest me tell this my
first stage;—
'Tis done; and even now I feel all
dim the shift
Of thought. These are my last
thoughts; I discern
Faintly immortal life, and truth, and
good.
And why thou must be mine is, that
e'en now,
In the dim hush of night—that I have
done—
With fears and sad forebodings: I
look thro'
And say, "E'en at the last I have her
still,
"With her delicious eyes as clear as
heaven,
"When rain in a quick shower has
beat down mist,
"And clouds float white in the sun
like broods of swans."
How the blood lies upon her cheek,
all spread
As thinned by kisses; only in her lips
It wells and pulses like a living thing,
And her neck looks, like marble
misted o'er
With love-breath, a dear thing to kiss
and love,
Standing beneath me—looking out to
me.
As I might kill her and be loved for it.
Love me—love me, Pauline, love
nought but me;
Leave me not. All these words are
wild and weak,
Believe them not, Pauline. I stooped
so low
But to behold thee purer by my side,
To show thou art my breath—my life
—a last

Resource—an extreme want: never
 believe
 Aught better could so look to thee, nor
 seek
 Again the world of good thoughts left
 for me.
 There were bright troops of undis-
 covered suns,
 Each equal in their radiant course.
 There were
 Clusters of far fair isles, which ocean
 kept
 For his own joy, and his waves broke
 on them
 Without a choice. And there was a
 dim crowd
 Of visions, each a part of the dim
 whole.
 And a star left his peers and came
 with peace
 Upon a storm, and all eyes pined for
 him.
 And one isle harboured a sea-beaten
 ship,
 And the crew wandered in its bowers,
 and plucked
 Its fruits, and gave up all their hopes
 for home.
 And one dream came to a pale poet's
 sleep,
 And he said, "I am singled out by God,
 "No sin must touch me." I am very
 weak,
 But what I would express is,—Leave
 me not,
 Still sit by me—with beating breast,
 and hair
 Loosened—watching earnest by my
 side,
 Turning my books, or kissing me
 when I
 Look up—like summer wind. Be
 still to me
 A key to music's mystery, when mind
 fails,
 A reason, a solution, and a clue.
 You see I have thrown off my pre-
 scribed rules:
 I hope in myself—and hope, and pant,
 and love
 You'll find me better—know me more
 than when

You loved me as I was. Smile not:
 I have
 Much yet to gladden you—to
 in you.
 No more of the past—I'll look within
 no more --
 I have too trusted to my own wild
 wants—
 Too trusted to myself—to intuition.
 Draining the wine alone in the still
 night,
 And seeing how—as gathering films
 arose,
 As by an inspiration life seemed
 bare
 And grinning in its vanity, and ends
 Hard to be dreamed of, stared at me
 as fixed,
 And others suddenly became all
 foul,
 As a fair witch turned an old hag at
 night.
 No more of this—we will go hand in
 hand,
 I will go with thee, even as a child,
 Looking no further than thy sweet
 commands.
 And thou hast chosen where this life
 shall be—
 The land which gave me thee shall be
 our home,
 Where nature lies all wild amid her
 lakes
 And snow-swathed mountains, and
 vast pines all girl
 With ropes of snow—where nature
 lies all bare,
 Suffering none to view her but a
 race
 Most stunted and deformed—like the
 mute dwarfs
 Which wait upon a naked Indian
 queen.
 And there (the time being when the
 heavens are thick
 With storms) I'll sit with thee while
 thou dost sing
 Thy native songs, gay as a desert
 bird
 Who crieth as he flies for perfect
 joy,

Or telling me old stories of dead knights.
 Or I will read old lays to thee—how
 she,
 The fair pale sister, went to her chill
 grave
 With power to love, and to be loved,
 and live.
 Or we will go together, like twin
 gods
 Of the infernal world, with scented
 lamp
 Over the dead—to call and to awake—
 Over the unshaped images which
 lie
 Within my mind's cave—only leaving
 all
 That tells of the past doubts. So when
 spring comes,
 And sunshine comes again like an old
 smile,
 And the fresh waters, and awakened
 birds,
 And budding woods await us—I shall
 be
 Prepared, and we will go and think
 again,
 And all old loves shall come to us—but
 changed
 As some sweet thought which harsh
 words veiled before;
 Feeling God loves us, and that all that
 errs,
 Is a strange dream which death will
 dissipate;
 And then when I am firm we'll seek
 again
 My own land, and again I will ap-
 proach
 My old designs, and calmly look on
 all
 The works of my past weakness, as
 one views
 Some scene where danger met him
 long before.
 Ah! that such pleasant life should be
 but dreamed!
 But what'er come of it—and tho' it
 fade,
 And tho' ere the cold morning all be
 gone
 As it will be;—tho' music wait for
 me.
 And fair eyes and bright wine, laugh-
 ing like sin,
 Which steals back softly on a soul
 half saved;
 And I be first to deny all, and de-
 spise
 This verse, and these intents which
 seem so fair:
 Still this is all my own, this mon-
 strous
 pride,
 No less I make an end in perfect
 joy.
 E'en in my brightest time, a lurking
 fear
 Possessed me. I well knew my weak
 resolves,
 I felt the witchery that makes mind
 sleep
 Over its treasures—as one half afraid
 To make his riches definite—but
 now
 These feelings shall not utterly be
 lost,
 I shall not know again that nameless
 care,
 Lest leaving all undone in youth, some
 new
 And undreamed end reveal itself too
 late:
 For this song shall remain to tell for
 ever,
 That when I lost all hope of such a
 change,
 Suddenly Beauty rose on me again.
 No less I make an end in perfect
 joy,
 For I, having thus again been
 visited,
 Shall doubt not many another bliss
 awaits,
 And tho' this weak soul sink, and
 darkness come,
 Some little word shall light it up
 again,
 And I shall see all clearer and love
 better;
 I shall again go o'er the tracts of
 thought,
 As one who has a right; and I shall
 live

<p>With poets—calmer—purer still each time, And beauteous shapes will come to me again, And unknown secrets will be trusted me, Which were not mine when wavering —but now I shall be priest and lover, as of old.</p> <p>Sun-treader, I believe in God, and truth, And love; and as one just escaped from death Would bind himself in bands of friends to feel He lives indeed—so, I would lean on thee;</p>	<p>Thou must be ever with me—most in gloom When such shall come—but chiefly when I die, For I seem dying, as one going in the dark To fight a giant—and live thou for ever, And be to all what thou hast been to me— All in whom this wakes pleasant thoughts of me, Know my last state is happy—free from doubt, Or touch of fear. Love me and wish me well!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">RICHMOND, October 22, 1832.</p>
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PARACELSUS

PERSONS

AUREOLUS PARACELSUS,
FESTUS and MICHAL, his friends,
APRILE, an Italian Poet.

I.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES

SCENE.—*Würzburg—a garden in
the environs.* 1512.

FESTUS, PARACELSUS, MICHAL.

Par. Come close to me, dear
friends; still closer; thus!
Close to the heart which, though long
time roll by
Ere it again beat quicker, pressed to
yours,
As now it beats—perchance a long,
long time—
At least henceforth your memories
shall make
Quiet and fragrant as befits their home.
Nor shall my memory want a home
in yours—
Alas, that it requires too well such
free
Forgiving love as shall embalm it
there!
For if you would remember me aright—
As I was born to be—you must forget
All fitful, strange, and moody way-
wardness
Which e'er confused my better spirit,
to dwell
Only on moments such as these, dear
friends!
—My heart no truer, but my words
and ways
More true to it: as Michal, some
months hence,
Will say, "this autumn was a pleasant
time,"

For some few sunny days; and over-
look
Its bleak wind, hankering after pining
leaves.
Autumn would fain be sunny—I would
look
Liker my nature's truth; and both are
frail,
And both beloved for all their frailty!
Mich. Aureole!
Par. Drop by drop!—she is weep-
ing like a child!
Not so! I am content—more than
content—
Nay, Autumn wins you best by this
its mute
Appeal to sympathy for its decay!
Look up, sweet Michal, nor esteem
the less
Your stained and drooping vines their
grapes bow down,
Nor blame those creaking trees bent
with their fruit,
That apple-tree with a rare after-
birth
Of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth
among!
Then for the winds—what wind that
ever raved
Shall vex that ash that overlooks you
both,
So proud it wears its berries? Ah!
at length,
The old smile meet for her, the lady
of this
Sequestered nest! This kingdom,
limited
Alone by one old populous green wall,
Tenanted by the ever-busy flies,
Grey crickets, and shy lizards, and
quick spiders,
Each family of the silver-threaded
moss—

Which, look through, near, this way,
and it appears
A stubble-field, or a cone-brake—a
marsh
Of bulrush whitening in the sun: laugh
now!
Fancy the crickets, each one in his
house,
Looking out, wondering at the world
--or best,
Yon painted snail, with his gay shell
of dew,
Travelling to see the glossy balls high
up
Hung by the caterpillar, like gold
lamps!
Mich. In truth we have lived care-
lessly and well!
Par. And shall, my perfect pair—
each, trust me, born
For the other; nay, your very hair,
when mixed,
Is of one hue. For where save in this
nook
Shall you two walk, when I am far
away,
And wish me prosperous fortune?
Stay! Whene'er
That plant shall wave its tangles
lightly and softly,
As a queen's languid and imperial arm
Which scatters crowns among her
lovers, you
Shall be reminded to predict to me
Some great success! Ah, see! the sun
sinks broad
Behind St. Saviour's: wholly gone,
at last!
Fest. Now, Aureole, stay those
wandering eyes awhile!
You are ours to-night at least; and
while you spoke
Of Michal and her tears, the thought
came back
That none could leave what he so
seemed to love:
But that last look destroys my dream
—that look!
As if, where'er you gazed, there stood
a star!
How far was Würzburg, with its
church and spire,

And garden-walls, and all things they
contain,
From that look's far alighting?
Par. I but spoke
And looked alike from simple joy, to
see
The beings I love best, shut in so well
From all rude chances like to be my lot,
That, when afar, my weary spirit,—
disposed
To lose awhile its care in soothing
thoughts
Of them, their pleasant features, looks,
and words,—
Need never hesitate, nor apprehend
Encroaching trouble may have reached
them too,
Nor have recourse to Fancy's busy aid
To fashion even a wish in their behalf
Beyond what they possess already here;
But, unobstructed, may at once forget
Itself in them, assured how well they
are.
Beside, this Festus knows, he thinks
me one
Whom quiet and its charms attract in
vain,
One scarce aware of all the joys I
quit,
Too fill'd with airy hopes to make
account
Of soft delights which free hearts
garner up:
Whereas, behold how much our sense
of all
That's beauteous proves alike! When
Festus learns
That every common pleasure of the
world
Affects me as himself; that I have
just
As varied appetites for joy derived
From common things; a stake in life,
in short,
Like his; a stake which rash pursuit
of aims
That life affords not, would as soon
destroy;—
He may convince himself, that, this in
view,
I shall act well advised: and last,
because,

Though heaven and earth, and all things, were at stake,
Sweet Michal must not weep, our parting eve!

Fest. True: and the eve is deepening, and we sit
As little anxious to begin our talk
As though to-morrow I could open it
As we paced arm in arm the cheerful town

At sun-dawn; and continue it by fits
(Old Trithem busied with his class the while)

In that dim chamber where the noon-streaks peer

Half frightened by the awful tones around;

And here at home unbosom all the rest

From even-blush to midnight: but, to-morrow! . . .

Have I full leave to tell my inmost mind?

We two were brothers, and henceforth the world

Will rise between us:—all my freest mind?

'Tis the last night, dear Aureole!

Par. Oh, say on!
Devise some test of love—some arduous feat

To be performed for you—say on! If night

Be spent the while, the better! Recall how oft

My wondrous plans, and dreams, and hopes, and fears,

Have never wearied you . . . oh, no! . . . as I

Recall, and never vividly as now,
Your true affection, born when Einsiedeln

And its green hills were all the world to us,

And still increasing to this night, which ends

My further stay at Würzburg . . . Oh one day

You shall be very proud! Say on, dear friends!

Fest. In truth? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,

Rather than yours; for vain all projects seem

To stay your course: I said my latest hope

Is fading even now. A story tells
Of some far embassy despatched to buy
The favour of an eastern king, and how
The gifts they offered proved but dazzling dust

Shed from the ore-beds native to his clime:

Just so, the value of repose and love,
I meant should tempt you, better far than I

You seem to comprehend—and yet desist

No whit from projects where repose nor love

Have part.

Par. Once more? Alas! as I forbode!

Fest. A solitary briar the bank puts forth

To save our swan's nest floating out to sea.

Par. Dear Festus, hear me. What is it you wish?

That I should lay aside my heart's pursuit,

Abandon the sole ends for which I live,
Reject God's great commission—and so die!

You bid me listen for your true love's sake:

Yet how has grown that love? Even in a long

and patient cherishing of the self-same spirit

It now would quell! as though a mother hoped

To stay the lusty manhood of the child
Once weak upon her knees. I was not born

Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank

From aught which marked me out apart from men:

I would have lived their life, and died their death,

Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny:
But you first guided me through doubt and fear.

Taught me to know mankind and
 know myself;
 And now that I am strong and full of
 hope,
 That, from my soul, I can reject all
 aims
 Save those your earnest words made
 plain to me;
 Now, that I touch the brink of my
 design,
 When I would have a triumph in
 their eyes,
 A glad cheer in their voices—Michal
 weeps,
 And Festus ponders gravely!
Fest. When you deign
 To hear my purpose . . .
Par. Hear it? I can say
 Beforehand all this evening's confer-
 ence!
 'Tis this way, Michal, that he uses:
 first,
 Or he declares, or I, the leading points
 Of our best scheme of life, what is
 man's end,
 And what God's will—no two faiths
 e'er agreed
 As his with mine: next, each of us
 allows
 Faith should be acted on as best we
 may:
 Accordingly, I venture to submit
 A plan, in lack of better, for pursuing
 The path which God's will seems to
 authorize:
 Well—he discerns much good in it,
 avows
 This motive worthy, that hope
 plausible.
 A danger here, to be avoided—there,
 An oversight to be repaired: at last
 Our two minds go together—all the
 good
 Approved by him, I gladly recognize;
 All he counts bad, I thankfully discard;
 And nought forbids my looking up at
 last
 For some stray comfort in his cautious
 brow—
 When, lo! I learn that, spite of all,
 there lurks
 Some innate and inexplicable germ

Of failure in my schemes; so that
 last
 It all amounts to this—the sovereign
 proof
 That we devote ourselves to God, i
 seen
 In living just as though there were n
 God:
 A life which, prompted by the sad and
 blind
 Lusts of the world, Festus abhors the
 most
 But which these tenets sanctify at once
 Though to less subtle wits it seems the
 same,
 Consider it how they may.
Mich. Is it so, Festus?
 He speaks so calmly and kindly—is it
 so?
Par. Reject those glorious visions
 of God's love
 And man's design; laugh loud that
 God should send
 Vast longings to direct us; say how
 soon
 Power satiates these, or lust, or gold;
 I know
 The world's cry well, and how to
 answer it!
 But this ambiguous warfare . . .
Fest. . . . Wearies so
 That you will grant no last leave to
 your friend
 To urge it?—for his sake, not yours?
 I wish
 To send my soul in good hopes after
 you;
 Never to sorrow that uncertain words,
 Erringly apprehended—a new creed,
 Ill understood—begot rash trust in you,
 And shared in your undoing.
Par. Choose your side:
 Hold or renounce: but meanwhile
 blame me not
 Because I dare to act on your own views,
 Nor shrink when they point onward,
 nor espy
 A peril where they most ensure success.
Fest. Prove that to me—but that!
 Prove you abide
 Within their warrant, nor presump-
 tuous boast

God's labour laid on you ; prove, all
you covet

A mortal may expect ; and, most of all,
Prove the strange course you now
affect, will lead

To its attainment — and I bid you speed,
Nay, count the minutes till you venture
forth !

You smile ; but I had gathered from
slow thought

Much musing on the fortunes of my
friend —

Matter I deemed could not be urged
in vain :

But all leaves me at my need : in
shreds

And fragments I must venture what
remains.

Mich. Ask at once, Festus, where-
fore he should scorn . . .

Fest. Stay, Michal : Aureole, I
speak guardedly

And gravely, knowing well, whate'er
your error,

This is no ill-considered choice of
yours —

No sudden fancy of an ardent boy.

Not from your own confiding words
alone

Am I aware your passionate heart long
since

Gave birth to, nourished, and at length
matures

This scheme. I will not speak of
Einsiedeln,

Where I was born your elder by some
years

Only to watch you fully from the first :
In all beside, our mutual tasks were fixed

Even then—'twas mine to have you in
my view

As you had your own soul and those
intent

Which filled it when, to crown your
dearest wish,

With a tumultuous heart, you left with
me

Our childhood's home to join the
favoured few

Whom, here at Würzburg, Trithem
deigns to teach

A portion of his lore : and not the best

Of those so favoured, whom you now
despise,

Came earnest as you came ; resolved,
like you,

To grasp all, and retain all, and deserve
by patient toil a wide renown like his.

And this new ardour which supplants
the old,

I watched, too ; 'twas significant and
strange,

In one matched to his soul's content
at length

With rivals in the search for Wisdom's
prize,

To see the sudden pause, the total
change ;

From contest, the transition to repose —
From pressing onward as his fellows

pressed,

To a blank idleness ; yet most unlike
The dull stagnation of a soul, content,

Once foiled, to leave betimes a thrive-
less quest.

That careless bearing, free from all
pretence

Even of contempt for what it ceased
to seek—

Smiling humility, praising much, yet
waiving

What it professed to praise—though
not so well

Maintained but that rare outbreaks,
fierce as brief,

Revealed the hidden scorn, as quickly
curbed—

That ostentatious show of past defeat,
That ready acquiescence in contempt,

I deemed no other than the letting go
His shivered sword, of one about to
spring

Upon his foe's throat ; but it was not
thus :

Not that way looked your brooding
purpose then.

For after-signs disclosed, what you
confirmed,

That you prepared to task to the
utmost

Your strength, in furtherance of a
certain aim,

Which—while it bore the name your
rivals gave

Their own most puny efforts—was so
 vast
 In scope that it included their best
 flights,
 Combined them, and desired to gain
 one prize
 In place of many,—the secret of the
 world,
 Of man, and man's true purpose, path,
 and fate :
 —That you, not nursing as a mere
 vague dream
 This purpose, with the sages of the
 Past,
 Have struck upon a way to this, if all
 You trust be true, which following,
 heart and soul,
 You, if a man may, dare aspire to
 KNOW :
 And that this aim shall differ from a
 host
 Of aims alike in character and kind,
 Mostly in this, to seek its own reward
 In itself only, not an alien end
 To blend therewith ; no hope, nor fear,
 nor joy,
 Nor woe, to elsewhere move you, but
 this pure
 Devotion to sustain you or betray :
 Thus you aspire.
Par. You shall not state it thus :
 I should not differ from the dreamy
 crew
 You speak of. I profess no other
 share
 In the selection of my lot, than this,
 A ready answer to the will of God
 Who summons me to be his organ : all
 Whose innate strength supports them
 shall succeed
 No better than your sages.
Fest. Such the aim, then,
 God sets before you ; and 'tis doubt-
 less need
 That He appoint no less the way of
 praise
 Than the desire to praise ; for, though
 I hold
 With you, the setting forth such praise
 to be
 The natural end and service of a
 man,

And think such praise is best attained
 when man
 Attains the general welfare of his
 kind—
 Yet, this, the end, is not the instrument.
 Presume not to serve God apart from
 such
 Appointed channel as He wills shall
 gather
 Imperfect tributes—for that sole
 obedience
 Valued, perchance. He seeks not
 that his altars
 Blaze—careless how, so that they do
 but blaze.
 Suppose this, then ; that God selected
 you
 To KNOW (heed well your answers,
 for my faith
 Shall meet implicitly what they affirm)
 I cannot think you dare annex to such
 Selection aught beyond a steadfast will,
 An intense hope, nor let your gifts
 create
 Scorn or neglect of ordinary means
 Conducive to success—make destiny
 Dispense with man's endeavour. Now,
 dare you search
 Your inmost heart, and candidly avow
 Whether you have not rather wild
 desire
 For this distinction, than security
 Of its existence ; whether you discern
 The path to the fulfilment of your
 purpose
 Clear as that purpose—and again,
 that purpose
 Clear as your yearning to be singled
 out
 For its pursuer. Dare you answer this?
Par. (After a pause). No, I have
 nought to fear ! Who will may
 know
 The secret'st workings of my soul.
 What though
 It be so?—if indeed the strong desire
 Eclipse the aim in me?—if splendour
 break
 Upon the outset of my path alone,
 And duskest shade succeed ? What
 fairer seal
 Shall I require to my authentic mission

Than this fierce energy?—this instinct
striving

Because its nature is to strive?—enticed
By the security of no broad course,

With no success forever in its eyes!
How know I else such glorious fate
my own,

But in the restless irresistible force
That works within me? Is it for
human will

To institute such impulses?—still less,
To disregard their promptings? What
should I

Do, kept among you all; your loves,
your cares,

Your life—all to be mine? Be sure
that God

Ne'er dooms to waste the strength He
deigns impart!

Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at
once

Into the vast and unexplored abyss,
What full-grown power informs her
from the first,

Why she not marvels, strenuously
beating

The silent boundless regions of the
sky!

Be sure they sleep not whom God
needs! Nor fear

Their holding light his charge, when
every hour

That finds that charge delayed, is a
new death.

This for the faith in which I trust;
and hence

I can allure so well the idle arts

These pedants strive to learn and
teach; Black Arts,

Great Works, the Secret and Sublime,
forsooth—

Let others prize: too intimate a tie
Connects me with our God! A sullen
fiend

To do my bidding, fallen and hateful
spite

To help me—what are these, at best,
beside

God helping, God directing every-
where.

So that the earth shall yield her
secrets up,

And every object shall be charmed to
strike,

Teach, gratify, her master God
appoints?

And I am young, my Festus, happy
and free!

I can devote myself; I have a life
To give; I, singled out for this, the
One!

Think, think; the wide east, where
old Wisdom sprung;

The bright south, where she dwelt;
the hopeful north,

All are passed o'er—it lights on me!
'Tis time

New hopes should animate the world,
new light

Should dawn from new revealings to
a race

Weighted down so long, forgotten so
long; so shall

The heaven reserved for us, at last
receive

Creatures whom no unwonted splen-
dours blind,

But ardent to confront the unclouded
blaze

Whose beams not seldom blessed their
pilgrimage,

Not seldom glorified their life below.

Fest. My words have their old fate
and make faint stand

Against your glowing periods. Call
this, truth—

Why not pursue it in a fast retreat,
Some one of Learning's many palaces,

After approved example; seeking there
Calm converse with the great dead,

soul to soul,

Who laid up treasure with the like
intent?

—So lift yourself into their airy place,
And fill out full their unfulfilled-careers,

Unravelling the knots their baffled skill
Pronounced inextricable, true!—but

left

Far less confused? A fresh eye, a
fresh hand,

Might do much at their vigour's
waning-point;

Succeeding with new-breathed and ear-
nest force,

As at old games a runner snatched the torch
 From runner still : this way success might be.
 But you have coupled with your enterprise,
 An arbitrary self-repugnant scheme
 Of seeking it in strange and untried paths.
 What books are in the desert ? writes the sea
 The secret of her yearning in vast caves
 Where yours will fall the first of human feet ?
 Has Wisdom sate there and recorded aught
 You press to read ? Why turn aside from her
 To visit, where her vesture never glanced,
 Now—solitudes consigned to barrenness
 By God's decree, which who shall dare impugn ?
 Now—ruins where she paused but would not stay.
 Old ravaged cities that, renouncing her,
 She called an endless curse on, so it came—
 Or, worst of all, now—men you visit, men,
 Ignoblest troops that never heard her voice,
 Or hate it, men without one gift from Rome
 Or Athens,—these shall Aureole's teachers be !
 Rejecting past example, practice, precept,
 Aidless 'mid these he thinks to stand alone :
 Thick like a glory round the Stagyræ
 Your rivals throng, the sages : here stand you !
 Whate'er you may protest, knowledge is not
 Paramount in your love ; or for her sake
 You would collect all help from every source—
 Rival or helper, friend, foe, all would merge
 In the broad class of those who showed her haunts,
 And those who showed them not.
Par. What shall I say ?
 Festus, from childhood I have been possessed
 By a fire—by a true fire, or faint or fierce,
 As from without some master, so it seemed,
 Repressed or urged its current : this but ill
 Expresses what I would convey—but rather
 I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
 Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,
 So became manifest. I knew not then
 What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
 At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
 Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
 Coming and going all the while—till dawned
 His true time's advent, and could then record
 The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
 Then I might tell more of the breath so light
 Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
 Among my hair. Youth is confused ; yet never
 So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
 I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
 A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep.
 And having this within me and about me
 While Einsiedeln, its mountains, lakes, and woods
 Confined me—what oppressive joy was mine

When life grew plain, and I first
viewed the thronged,
The ever-moving concourse of man-
kind !
Believe that ere I joined them—ere I
knew
The purpose of the pageant, or the
place
Consigned to me within its ranks—
while yet
Wonder was freshest and delight
most pure—
'Twas then that least supportable
appeared
A station with the brightest of the
crowd,
A portion with the proudest of them
all !
And from the tumult in my breast,
this only
Could I collect—that I must thence-
forth die,
Or elevate myself far, far above
The gorgeous spectacle. I seemed
to long
At once to trample on, yet save man-
kind—
To make some unexampled sacrifice
In their behalf—to wring some
wondrous good
From heaven or earth for them—to
perish, winning
Eternal weal in the act : as who should
dare
Pluck out the angry thunder from its
cloud,
That all its gathered flame discharged
on him,
No storm might threaten summer's
azure sleep :
Yet never to be mixed with men so
much
As to have part even in my own work
—share
In my own largess. Once the feat
achieved,
I would withdraw from their officious
praise,
Would gently put aside their profuse
thanks :
Like some knight traversing a wilder-
ness,

Who, on his way, may chance to free
a tribe
Of desert-people from their dragon-
foe ;
When all the swarthy race press round
to kiss
His feet, and choose him for their king,
and yield
Their poor tents, pitched among the
sand-hills, for
His realm ; and he points, smiling, to
his scarf,
Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet,
Gay set with twinkling stones—and to
the east,
Where these must be displayed !
Fest. Good : let us hear
No more about your nature, "which
first shrank
"From all that marked you out apart
from men !"
Par. I touch on that ; these words
but analyse
That first mad impulse—'twas as brief
as fond ;
For as I gazed again upon the show,
I soon distinguished here and there a
shape
Palm-wreathed and radiant, forehead
and full eye.
Well pleased was I their state should
thus at once
Interpret my own thoughts:—"Behold
the clue
"To all," I rashly said, "and what I
pine
"To do, these have accomplished :
we are peers !
"They know, and therefore rule : I,
too, will know !"
You were beside me, Festus, as you say ;
You saw me plunge in their pursuits
whom Fame
Is lavish to attest the lords of mind ;
Not pausing to make sure the prize in
view
Would satiate my cravings when ob-
tained—
But since they strove I strove. Then
came a slow
And strangling failure. We aspired
alike,

Yet not the meanest plodder Tritheim
schools

But faced me, all-sufficient, all-content,
Or staggered only at his own strong
wits;

While I was restless, nothing satisfied,
Distrustful, most perplexed. I would
slur over

That struggle; suffice it, that I loathed
myself

As weak compared with them, yet felt
somehow

A mighty power was brooding, taking
shape

Within me: and this lasted till one
night

When, as I sate revolving it and more,
A still voice from without said—

“See'st thou not,

“Desponding child, whence came
defeat and loss?

“Even from thy strength. Consider:
hast thou gazed

“Presumptuously on Wisdom's coun-
tenance,

“No veil between; and can thy hands
which falter

“Unguided by thy brain the mighty
sight

“Continues to absorb, pursue their
task

“On earth like these around thee—
what their sense

“Which radiance ne'er distracted,
clear describes?

“If thou wouldst share their fortune,
choose their life,

“Unfed by splendour. Let each task
present

“Its petty good to thee. Waste not
thy gifts

“In profitless waiting for the gods'
descent,

“But have some idol of thine own to
dress

“With their array. Know, not for
knowing's sake,

“But to become a star to men for ever.

“Know, for the gain it gets, the
praise it brings,

“The wonder it inspires, the love it
breeds.

“Look one step onward, and secure
that step.”

And I smiled as one never smiles but
once;

Then first discovering my own aim's
extent,

Which sought to comprehend the
works of God,

And God himself, and all God's inter-
course

With the human mind; I understood,
no less,

My fellows' studies, whose true worth
I saw,

But smiled not, well aware who stood
by me.

And softer came the voice—“There
is a way—

“'Tis hard for flesh to tread therein,
imbued

“With frailty—hopeless, if indulgence
first

“Have ripened inborn germs of sin
to strength:

“Wilt thou adventure for my sake
and man's,

“Apart from all reward?” And last
it breathed—

“Be happy, my good soldier; I am
by thee,

“Be sure, even to the end!”—I
answered not,

Knowing Him. As He spoke, I was
endued

With comprehension and a steadfast
will;

And when He ceased, my brow was
sealed His own.

If there took place no special change
in me,

How comes it all things wore a
different hue

Thenceforward?—pregnant with vast
consequence—

Teeming with grand results—loaded
with fate;

So that when quailing at the mighty
range

Of secret truths which yearn for birth,
I haste

To contemplate undazzled some one
truth,

Its bearings and effects alone—at once
What was a speck expands into a star,
Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
Till I near craze. I go to prove my
soul!

I see my way as birds their trackless
way—

I shall arrive! what time, what circuit
first,

I ask not: but unless God send His
hail

Or blinding fireballs, sleet, or stifling
snow,

In some time—His good time—I shall
arrive:

He guides me and the bird. In His
good time!

Mich. Vex Him no further, Festus;
it is so!

Fest. Just thus you help me ever.
This would hold

Were it the trackless air, and not a
path

Inviting you, distinct with footprints
yet

Of many a mighty spirit gone that
way.

You may have purer views than theirs,
perhaps,

But they were famous in their day—
the proofs

Remain. At least accept the light
they lend.

Par. Their light! the sum of all is
briefly this:

They laboured, and grew famous;
and the fruits

Are best seen in a dark and groaning
earth.

Given over to a blind and endless
strife

With evils, which of all your Gods
abates?

No; I reject and spurn them utterly,
And all they teach. Shall I still sit

beside

Their dry wells, with a white lip and
filmed eye.

While in the distance heaven is blue
above

Mountains where sleep the unsunned
tarns?

Fest.

And yet
As strong delusions have prevailed
ere now:

Men have set out as gallantly to seek
Their ruin; I have heard of such—
yourself

Avow all hitherto have failed and
fallen.

Mich. Nay, Festus, when but as
the pilgrims faint

Through the drear way, do you ex-
pect to see

Their city dawn afar amid the
clouds?

Par. Ay, sounds it not like some
old well-known tale?

For me, I estimate their works and
them

So rightly, that at times I almost
dream

I too have spent a life the sages' way,
And tread once more familiar paths.

Perchance

I perished in an arrogant self-re-
liance

An age ago; and in that act, a
prayer

For one more chance went up so
earnest, so

Instinct with better light let in by
Death,

That life was blotted out—not so
completely

But scattered wrecks enough of it
remain,

Dim memories; as now, when seems
once more

The goal in sight again: all which,
indeed,

Is foolish, and only means—the flesh
I wear,

The earth I tread, are not more clear
to me

Than my belief, explained to you or
no.

Fest. And who am I to challenge
and dispute

That clear belief? I put away all
fear.

Mich. Then Aureole is God's com-
missary! he shall

Be great and grand—and all for us!

Par. No, sweet !
Not great and grand. If I can serve
mankind

'Tis well—but there our intercourse
must end :

I never will be served by those I
serve.

Fest. Look well to this ; here is a
plague-spot, here,

Disguise it how you may ! 'Tis true,
you utter

This scorn while by our side and
loving us ;

'Tis but a spot as yet ; but it will
break

Into a hideous blotch if overlooked.
How can that course be safe which
from the first

Produces carelessness to human
love ?

It seems you have abjured the helps
which men

Who overpass their kind, as you
would do,

Have humbly sought—I dare not
thoroughly probe

This matter, lest I learn too much :
let be,

That popular praise would little in-
stigate

Your efforts, nor particular approval
Reward you ; put reward aside ;

alone
You shall go forth upon your arduous
task,

None shall assist you, none partake
your toil,

None share your triumph—still you
must retain

Some one to cast your glory on, to
share

Your rapture with. Were I elect
like you,

I would encircle me with love, and
raise

A rampart of my fellows ; it should
seem

Impossible for me to fail, so watched
By gentle friends who made my

cause their own ;
They should ward off Fate's envy—
the great gift,

Extravagant when claimed by me
alone,

Being so a gift to them as well as me.
If danger daunted me or ease se-
duced,

How calmly their sad eyes should
gaze reproach !

Mich. O Aureole, can I sing when
all alone,

Without first calling, in my fancy,
both

To listen by my side—even I ! And
you ?

Do you not feel this?—say that you
feel this !

Par. I feel 'tis pleasant that my
aims, at length

Allowed their weight, should be
supposed to need

A further strengthening in these
goodly helps !

My course allures for its own sake—
its sole

Intrinsic worth ; and ne'er shall boat
of mine

Adventure forth for gold and apes at
once.

Your sages say, "if human, therefore
weak :"

If weak, more need to give myself
entire

To my pursuit ; and by its side, all
else . . .

No matter ! I deny myself but little
In waiving all assistance save its

own—
Would there were some real sacrifice
to make !

Your friends the sages threw their
joys away,

While I must be content with keep-
ing mine.

Fest. But do not cut yourself from
human weal !

You cannot thrive—a man that dares
affect

To spend his life in service to his
kind,

For no reward of theirs, nor bound
to them

By any tie ; nor do so, Aureole !
No—

There are strange punishments for
 such. Give up
 (Although no visible good flow thence)
 some part
 Of the glory to another ; hiding thus,
 Even from yourself, that all is for
 yourself.
 Say, say almost to God—"I have
 done all
 "For her—not for myself!"
Par. And who,
 but lately,
 Was to rejoice in my success like
 you?
 Whom should I love but both of
 you?
Fest. I know not :
 But know this, you, that 'tis no wish
 of mine
 You should abjure the lofty claims
 you make ;
 Although I can no longer seek,
 indeed,
 To overlook the truth, that there will
 be
 A monstrous spectacle upon the
 earth,
 Beneath the pleasant sun, among the
 trees :
 —A being knowing not what love is.
 Hear me !
 You are endowed with faculties which
 bear
 Annexed to them as 'twere a dispen-
 sation
 To summon meaner spirits to do
 their will,
 And gather round them at their need ;
 inspiring
 Such with a love themselves can
 never feel—
 Passionless 'mid their passionate
 votaries.
 I know not if you joy in this or no,
 Or ever dream that common men can
 live
 On objects you prize lightly, but
 which make
 Their heart's sole treasure : the
 affections seem
 Beauteous at most to you, which we
 must taste

Or die : and this strange quality
 accords,
 I know not how, with you ; sits well
 upon
 That luminous brow, though in
 another it scowls
 An eating brand—a shame. I dare
 not judge you :
 The rules of right and wrong thus
 set aside,
 There's no alternative—I own you
 one
 Of higher order, under other laws
 Than bind us ; therefore, curb not
 one bold glance !
 'Tis best aspire. Once mingled with
 us all. . . .
Mich. Stay with us, Aureole ! cast
 those hopes away,
 And stay with us ! An angel warns
 me, too,
 Man should be humble ; you are
 very proud :
 And God, dethroned, has doleful
 plagues for such !
 He warns me not to dread a quick
 repulse,
 Nor slow defeat, but a complete
 success !
 You will find all you seek, and perish
 so !
Par. (after a pause). Are these
 the barren first fruits of my life ?
 Is love like this the natural lot of all ?
 How many years of pain might one
 such hour
 O'erbalance ? Dearest Michal, dearest
 Festus,
 What shall I say, if not that I desire
 To merit this your love ; and will,
 dear friends,
 In swerving nothing from my first
 resolves.
 See, the great moon ! and ere the
 mottled owls
 Were wide awake, I was to go. It
 seems
 You acquiesce at last in all save
 this—
 If I am like to compass what I seek
 By the untried career I chuse ; and
 then,

<p> If that career, making but small account Of much of life's delight, will yet retain Sufficient to sustain my soul—for thus I understand these fond fears just expressed. And first; the lore you praise and I neglect, The labours and the precepts of old time, I have not slightly disesteemed. But, friends, Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise From outward things, whate'er you may believe: There is an inmost centre in us all, Where truth abides in fulness; and around Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in, This perfect, clear perception—which is truth; A baffling and perverting carnal mesh Blinds it, and makes all error: and, <i>"to know"</i> Rather consists in opening out a way Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape, Than in effecting entry for a light Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly The demonstration of a truth, its birth, And you trace back the effluence to its spring And source within us, where broods radiance vast, To be elicited ray by ray, as chance Shall favour: chance—for hitherto, your sage Even as he knows not how those beams are born, As little knows he what unlocks their fount; And men have oft grown old among their books To die, case-hardened in their ignor- ance, </p>	<p> Whose careless youth had promised what long years Of unremitted labour ne'er per- formed: While, contrary, it has chanced some idle day, That autumn loiterers just as fancy- free As the midges in the sun, have oft given vent To truth—produced mysteriously as cape Of cloud grown out of the invisible air. Hence, may not truth be lodged alike in all, The lowest as the highest? some slight film The interposing bar which binds it up, And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage Some film removed, the happy outlet whence Truth issues proudly? See this soul of ours! How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled By age and waste, set free at last by death: Why is it, flesh enthalls it or en- throne's? What is this flesh we have to pene- trate? Oh, not alone when life flows still do truth And power emerge, but also when strange chance Ruffles its current; in unused con- juncture, When sickness breaks the body— hunger, watching, Excess, or languor—oftenest death's approach— Peril, deep joy, or woe. One man shall crawl Through life, surrounded with all stirring things, Unmoved—and he goes mad; and from the wreck </p>
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Of what he was, by his wild talk
 alone,
 You first collect how great a spirit he
 hid.
 Therefore, set free the soul alike in
 all,
 Discovering the true laws by which
 the flesh
 Bars in the spirit! We may not be
 doomed
 To cope with seraphs, but at least
 the rest
 Shall cope with us. Make no more
 giants, God!
 But elevate the race at once! We
 ask
 To put forth just our strength, our
 human strength,
 All starting fairly, all equipped
 alike,
 Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-
 hearted—
 See if we cannot beat thy angels
 yet!
 Such is my task. I go to gather
 this
 The sacred knowledge, here and
 there dispersed
 About the world, long lost or never
 found.
 And why should I be sad, or lorn of
 hope?
 Why ever make man's good distinct
 from God's?
 Or, finding they are one, why dare
 mistrust?
 Who shall succeed if not one pledged
 like me?
 Mine is no mad attempt to build a
 world
 Apart from His, like those who set
 themselves
 To find the nature of the spirit they
 bore,
 And, taught betimes that all their
 gorgeous dreams
 Were only born to vanish in this
 life,
 Refused to fit them to this narrow
 sphere,
 But chose to figure forth another
 world

And other frames meet for their vast
 desires,—
 Still, all a dream! Thus was life
 scorned; but life
 Shall yet be crowned: twine amar-
 anth! I am priest!
 And all for yielding with a lively
 spirit
 A poor existence—parting with a
 youth
 Like theirs who squander every
 energy
 Convertible to good, on painted
 toys,
 Breath-bubbles, gilded dust! And
 though I spurn
 All adventitious aims, from empty
 praise
 To love's award, yet whoso deems
 such helps
 Important, and concerns himself for
 me,
 May know even these will follow with
 the rest—
 As in the steady rolling Mayne,
 asleep
 Yonder, is mixed its mass of schistous
 ore.
 My own affections, laid to rest awhile,
 Will waken purified, subdued alone
 By all I have achieved; till then—
 till then . . .
 Ah! the time-wiling loitering of a
 page
 Through bower and over lawn, till
 eve shall bring
 The stately lady's presence whom he
 loves—
 The broken sleep of the fisher whose
 rough coat
 Enwraps the queenly pearl—these are
 faint types!
 See how they look on me—I triumph
 now!
 But one thing, Festus, Michal!—I
 have told
 All I shall e'er disclose to mortal:
 say—
 Do you believe I shall accomplish
 this?
 Fest. I do believe!
 Mich. I ever did believe!

Par. Those words shall never fade
 from out my brain !
 This earnest of the end shall never
 fade !
 Are there not, Festus, are there not,
 dear Michal,
 Two points in the adventure of the
 diver :
 One—when, a beggar, he prepares to
 plunge ?
 One—when, a prince, he rises with
 his pearl ?
Festus, I plunge !
Fest. I wait you when you rise !

II.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS

SCENE.—*Constantinople.*—" *The House of the Greek-conjurer.*" 1521.

PARACELSUS.

Over the waters in the vaporous
 west
 The sun goes down as in a sphere of
 gold,
 Behind the outstretched city, which
 between,
 With all that length of domes and
 minarets,
 Athwart the splendour, black and
 crooked runs
 Like a Turk verse along a scime-
 tar.
 There lie, thou saddest writing, and
 awhile
 Relieve my aching sight. 'Tis done
 at last !
 Strange—and the juggles of a sallow
 cheat
 Could win me to this act ! 'Tis as yon
 cloud
 Should voyage unwreck'd o'er many
 a mountain-top
 And break upon a molehill. I have
 dared
 Come to a pause with knowledge ;
 scan for once
 The heights already reach'd, without
 regard

To the extent above ; fairly com-
 pute
 What I have clearly gained ; for once
 excluding
 My future which should finish and
 fulfil
 All half-gains, and conjectures, and
 mere hopes—
 And this, because a fortune-teller
 bids
 His credulous enquirers write thus
 much,
 Their previous life's attainment, in
 his book,
 Before his promised secret, as he
 vaunts,
 Make that life perfect : here, accord-
 ingly,
 'Mid the uncouth recordings of such
 dupes,
 —Scrawled in like fashion, lie my
 life's results !

These few blurred characters suffice
 to note
 A stranger wandered long through
 many lands,
 And reaped the fruit he coveted in a
 few
 Discoveries, as appended here and
 there,
 The fragmentary produce of much
 toil,
 In a dim heap, fact and surmise
 together
 Confusedly massed, as when acquired ;
 himself
 Too bent on gaining more to calmly
 stay
 And scrutinise the little which he
 gained :
 Slit in the blank space 'twixt an
 idiot's gibber
 And a mad lover's ditty—lies the
 whole !

And yet those blottings chronicle a
 life—
 A whole life,—mine ! No thought to
 turn to act,
 No problem for the fancy, but a
 life

Spent and decided, wasted past recall,
Or worthy beyond peer. Stay, turn the page
And take its chance,—thus: what, concerning "life"
Does this remembrancer set down?—

"We say
"Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream."
"Tis the mere echo of time; and he whose heart
Beat first beneath a human heart, whose speech
Was copied from a human tongue, can never
Recall when he was living yet knew not this.
Nevertheless long seasons come and go,
Till some one hour's experience shows what nought,
He deemed, could clearer show; and ever after
An altered brow, and eye, and gait, and speech
Attest that now he knows the adage true
"Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream."

Ay, my brave chronicler, and this same time
As well as any: let my hour speak now!

Now! I can go no farther; well or ill—
'Tis done. I must desist and take my chance;
I cannot keep on the stretch; 'tis no back-shrinking—
For let the least assurance dawn, some end
To my toil seem possible, and I proceed
At any price, by any sacrifice:
Else, here I pause: the old Greek's prophecy
Is like to turn out true—"I shall not quit

"His chamber till I know what I desire!"
Was it the light wind sang it o'er the sea?

An end, a rest! strange how the notion, once
Admitted, gains strength every moment! Rest!
Where kept that thought so long? this throbbing brow
To cease—this beating heart to cease—its crowd
Of gnawing thoughts to cease!—To dare let down
My strung, so high-strung brain—to dare unnerve
My harassed o'ertasked frame—to know my place,
—My portion, my reward, my failure even,
Assigned, made sure for ever!—To lose myself
Among the common creatures of the world—
To draw some gain from having been a man—
Neither to hope nor fear—to live at length!
Oh, were it but in failure, to have rest!
What, sunk insensibly so deep? Has all
Been undergone for this? Was this the prayer
My labour qualified me to present
With no fear of refusal? Had I gone
Carelessly through my task, and so judged fit
To moderate my hopes; nay, were it now
My sole concern to exculpate myself,
And lessen punishment,—I could not chuse
An humbler mood to wait for the decree!
No, no, there needs not this; no, after all,
At worst I have performed my share of the task:

The rest is God's concern — mine,
 merely this,
 To know that I have obstinately held
 By my own work. The mortal
 whose brave foot
 Has trod, unscathed, the temple-
 courts so far
 That he describes at length the shrine
 of shrines,
 Must let no sneering of the demons'
 eyes,
 Whose wrath he met unquailing,
 follow sly
 And fasten on him, fairly past their
 power,
 If where he stands he dares but stay ;
 no, no—
 He must not stagger, faint and fall
 at last,
 —Knowing a charm to baffle them ;
 behold,
 He bares his front—a mortal ventures
 thus
 Serene amid the echoes, beams, and
 glooms !
 If he be priest henceforth, or if he
 wake
 The god of the place to ban and
 blast him there,—
 Both well ! What's failure or success
 to me ?
 I have subdued my life to the one
 end
 Ordained life ; there alone I cannot
 doubt,
 That only way I may be satisfied.
 Yes, well have I subdued my life !
 beyond
 The obligation of my strictest vows,
 The contemplation of my wildest
 bond,
 Which gave, in truth, my nature
 freely up,
 In what it should be, more than what
 it was—
 Consenting that whatever passions
 slept,
 Whatever impulses lay immatured,
 Should wither in the germ, —but
 scarce foreseeing
 That the soil, doomed thus to per-
 petual waste,

Would seem one day, remembered
 in its youth
 Beside the parched sand-tract which
 now it is,
 Already strewn with faint blooms,
 viewless then.
 I ne'er engaged to root up loves so
 frail
 I felt them not ; yet now, 'tis very
 plain
 Some soft spots had their birth in me
 at first --
 If not love, say, like love : there was
 a time
 When yet this wolfish hunger after
 knowledge
 Set not remorselessly love's claims
 aside ;
 This heart was human once, or why
 recall
 Einsiedeln, now, and Würzburg,
 which the Mayne
 Forsakes her course to fold as with
 an arm ?
 And Festus—my poor Festus, with
 his praise,
 And counsel, and grave fears—where
 is he now ?
 Or the sweet maiden, long ago his
 bride ?
 I surely loved them—that last night,
 at least,
 When we . . . gone ! gone ! the
 better : I am saved
 The sad review of an ambitious
 youth,
 Choked by vile lusts, unnoticed in
 their birth,
 But let grow up and wind around a
 will
 Till action was destroyed. No, I
 have gone
 Purging my path successively of
 aught
 Wearing the distant likeness of such
 lusts.
 I have made life consist of one
 idea :
 Ere that was master—up till that was
 born—
 I bear a memory of a pleasant life

Whose small events I treasure; till
 one morn
 I ran o'er the seven little grassy
 fields,
 Startling the flocks of nameless birds,
 to tell
 Poor Festus, leaping all the while for
 joy,
 To leave all trouble for futurity,
 Since I had just determined to
 become
 The greatest and most glorious man
 on earth.
 And since that morn all life has been
 forgot;
 All is one day—one only step
 between
 The outset and the end: one tyrant
 aim,
 Absorbing all, fills up the interval—
 One vast unbroken chain of thought,
 kept up
 Through a career or friendly or
 opposed
 To its existence: life, death, light
 and shade,
 The shows of the world, were bare
 receptacles
 Or indices of truth to be wrung
 thence,
 Not instruments of sorrow or de-
 light:
 For some one truth would dimly
 beacon me
 From mountains rough with pines,
 and flit and wink
 O'er dazzling wastes of frozen snow,
 and tremble
 Into assured light in some branching
 mine,
 Where ripens, swathed in fire, the
 liquid gold—
 And all the beauty, all the wonder
 fell
 On either side the truth, as its mere
 robe;
 Men saw the robe—I saw the august
 form.
 So far, then, I have voyaged with
 success,
 So much is good, then, in this work-
 ing sea

Which parts me from that happy
 strip of land—
 But o'er that happy strip a sun shone,
 too!
 And fainter gleams it as the waves
 grow rough,
 And still more faint as the sea
 widens; last
 I sicken on a dead gulph, streaked
 with light
 From its own putrefying depths
 alone!
 Then—God was pledged to take me
 by the hand;
 Now—any miserable juggler bends
 My pride to him. All seems alike
 at length:
 Who knows which are the wise and
 which the fools?
 God may take pleasure in confound-
 ing pride
 By hiding secrets with the scorned
 and base—
 He who stoops lowest may find most
 —in short,
 I am here; and all seems natural; I
 start not:
 And never having glanced behind to
 know
 If I had kept my primal light from
 wane,
 Am thus insensibly grown—what I
 am!
 Oh, bitter; very bitter!
 And more bitter,
 To fear a deeper curse, an inner ruin—
 Plague beneath plague—the last turn-
 ing the first
 To light beside its darkness. Better
 weep
 My youth and its brave hopes, all
 dead and gone,
 In tears which burn! Would I were
 sure to win
 Some startling secret in their stead!—
 a tincture
 Of force to flush old age with youth,
 or breed
 Gold, or imprison moonbeams till
 they change
 To opal shafts!—only that, startling it

Indignant back, I might convince
myself

My aims remained as ever supreme
and pure!

Even now, why not desire, for man-
kind's sake,

That if I fail, some fault may be the
cause, —

That, though I sink, another may
succeed?

O God, the despicable heart of us!

Shut out this hideous mockery from
my heart!

'Twas politic in you, Aureole, to
reject

Single rewards, and ask them in the
lump;

At all events, once launched, to hold
straight on:

For now 'tis all or nothing. Mighty
profit

Your gains will bring if they stop
short of such

Full consummation! As a man, you
had

A certain share of strength, and that
is gone

Already in the getting these you
boast.

Do not they seem to laugh, as who
should say—

“Great master, we are here indeed;
dragged forth

“To light: this hast thou done; be
glad! now, seek

“The strength to use which thou
hast spent in getting!”

And yet 'tis surely much, 'tis very
much,

Thus to have emptied youth of all its
gifts,

To feed a fire meant to hold out till
morn

Arrive with inexhaustible light; and lo,
I have heaped up my last, and day

dawns not!

While I am left with grey hair, faded
hands,

And furrowed brow. Ha, have I,
after all,

Mistaken the wild nursling of my
breast?

Knowledge it seemed, and Power,
and Recompense!

Was she who glided through my
room of nights,

Who laid my head on her soft knees,
and smoothed

The damp locks,—whose sly soothings
just began

When my sick spirit craved repose
awhile—

God! was I fighting Sleep off for
Death's sake?

God! Thou art Mind! Unto the
Master-Mind

Mind should be precious. Spare my
mind alone!

All else I will endure: if, as I stand
Here, with my gains, Thy thunder

smite me down,

I bow me; 'tis Thy will, Thy righteous
will;

I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die:
And if no trace of my career remain,

Save a thin corpse at pleasure of the
wind

In these bright chambers, level with
the air.

See Thou to it! But if my spirit
fail,

My once proud spirit forsake me at
the last!

Hast Thou done well by me? So do
not Thou!

Crush not my mind, dear God, though
I be crushed!

Hold me before the frequency of Thy
seraphs,

And say—“I crushed him, lest he
should disturb

“My law. Men must not know their
strength: behold,

“Weak and alone, how near he raised
himself!”

But if delusions trouble me—and
Thou,

Not seldom felt with rapture in Thy
help

Throughout my toil and wanderings,
dost intend

To work man's welfare through my
weak endeavour—
To crown my mortal forehead with a
beam
From Thine own blinding crown—to
smile, and guide
Thy puny hand, and let the work so
framed
Be styled my work,—hear me! I
covet not
An influx of new power, an angel's
soul:
It were no marvel then—but I have
reached
Thus far, a man; let me conclude, a
man!
Give but one hour of my first energy,
Or that invincible faith—one only
hour!
That I may cover with an eagle-glance
The truths I have, and spy some
certain way
To mould them, and completing them,
possess!
Yet God is good: I started sure of
that.
And why dispute it now? I'll not
believe
But some undoubted warning long ere
this
Had reached me: stars would write
His will in heaven,
As once when a labarum was not
deemed
Too much for the old founder of these
walls.
Then, if my life has not been natural,
It has been monstrous: yet, till late,
my course
So ardently engrossed me, that delight,
A pausing and reflecting joy, 'tis plain,
Though such were meant to follow as
its fruit,
Could find no place in it. True, I
am worn;
But who clothes summer, who is Life
itself?
God, that created all things, can
renew!
And then, though after-life to please
me now

Must have no likeness to the past,
what hinders
Reward from springing out of toil, as
changed
... bursts the flower from earth, and
root, and stalk?
What use were punishment, unless
some sin
Be first detected? let me know that
first!

(Aprie, from within)

I hear a voice, perchance I heard
Long ago, but all too low,
So that scarce a thought was stirred
If really spoke the voice or no:
I heard it in my youth, when first
The waters of my life outburst:
But now their stream ebbs faint, I
hear
The voice, still low, but fatal-clear—
As if all Poets, that God meant
Should save the world, and therefore
lent
Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused
To do His work, or lightly used
Those gifts, or failed through weak
endeavour,
And mourn, cast off by Him for ever,—
As if these leaned in airy ring
To call me; this the song they sing.

“Lost, lost! yet come,
With our wan troop make thy
home:
Come, come! for we
Will not breathe, so much as
breathe
Reproach to thee!
Knowing what thou sink'st
beneath:
So we sank in those old years,
We who bid thee, come! thou
last
Who, a living man, hast life
o'erpast,
And all together we, thy peers,
Will pardon ask for thee, the last
Whose trial is done, whose lot is
cast
With those who watch, but work
no more—

Who gaze on life, but live no
more :
And yet we trusted thou shouldst
speak
God's message which our lips,
too weak,
Refused to utter,—shouldst re-
deem
Our fault : such trust, and all, a
dream !
So we chose thee a bright birth-
place
Where the richness ran to
flowers—
Couldst not sing one song for
grace ?
Nor make one blossom man's
and ours ?
Must one more recreant to his race
Die with unexerted powers,
And join us, leaving as he found
The world, he was to loosen,
bound ?
Anguish ! ever and for ever ;
Still beginning, ending never !
Yet, lost and last one, come !
How couldst understand, alas,
What our pale ghosts strove to
say,
As their shades did glance and
pass
Before thee, night and day ?
Thou wert blind, as we were
dumb :
Once more, therefore, come, O
come !
How shall we better arm the spirit
Who next shall thy post of life in-
herit—
How guard him from thy ruin ?
Tell us of thy sad undoing
Here, where we sit, ever pursuing
Our weary task, ever renewing
Sharp sorrow, far from God who
gave
Our powers, and man they could
not save !”

APRILE enters.

A spirit better armed, succeeding me ?
Ha, ha ! our king that wouldst be,
here at last ?

Art thou the Poet who shall save the
world ?
Thy hand to mine. Stay, fix thine
eyes on mine.
Thou wouldst be king ? Still fix
thine eyes on mine !
Par. Ha, ha ! why crouchest not ?
Am I not king ?
So torture is not wholly unavailing !
Have my fierce spasms compelled
thee from thy lair ?
Art thou the Sage I only seemed to
be,
Myself of after-time, my very self
With sight a little clearer, strength
more firm,
Who robs me of my prize and takes
my place
For just a fault, a weakness, a neglect ?
I scarcely trusted God with the
surmise
That such might come, and thou
didst hear the while !
Apr. Thine eyes are lustreless to
mine ; my hair
Is soft, nay silken soft : to talk with
thee
Flushes my cheek, and thou art ashy-
pale,
True, thou hast laboured, hast with-
stood her lips,
The siren's ! Yes, 'tis like thou hast
attained !
Tell me, dear master, wherefore now
thou comest ?
I thought thy solemn songs would
have their meed
In after-time ; that I should hear the
earth
Exult in thee, and echo with thy praise,
While I was laid forgotten in my
grave.
Par. Not so ! I know thee, I am
not thy dupe !
Thou art ordained to follow in my
track,
Even as thou sayest, succeeding to my
place,
Reaping my sowing—as I scorned to
reap
The harvest sown by sages passed
away.

Thou art the sober searcher, cautious
striver,

As if, except through me, thou had'st
searched or striven !

Ay, tell the world ! Degrade me,
after all,

To an aspirant after fame, not
truth—

To all but envy of thy fate, be sure !

Apr. Nay, sing them to me ; I shall
envy not :

Thou shalt be king ! Sing thou, and
I will stand

Beside, and call deep silence for thy
songs,

And worship thee, as I had ne'er
been meant

To fill thy throne—but none shall
ever know !

Sing to me : for already thy wild eyes
Unlock my heart-springs, as some
crystal-shaft

Reveals by some chance blaze its
parent fount

After long time—so thou reveal'st my
soul !

All will flash forth at t, with thee
to hear !

Par. (His secret ! my successor's
secret—fool !)

I am he that aspired to KNOW—and
thou ?

Apr. I would LOVE infinitely, and
be loved !

Par. Poor slave ! I am thy king
indeed.

Apr. Thou deem'st

That—born a spirit, dowered even
as thou,

Born for thy fate—because I could
not curb

My yearnings to possess at once the
full

Enjoyment ; yet neglected all the
means

Of realising even the frailest joy ;
Gathering no fragments to appease

my want,
Yet nursing up that want till thus I

die—
Thou deem'st I cannot trace thy safe,

sure march,

O'er perils that o'erwhelm me,
triumphing,

Neglecting nought below for aught
above,

Despising nothing and ensuring all—
Nor that I could (my time to come

again)
Lead thus my spirit securely as thine

own :
Listen, and thou shalt see I know

thee well.
I would love infinitely . . . Ah, lost !

lost !
O ye who armed me at such

cost,
Your faces shall I bear to see

With your gifts even yet on
me?—

Par. (Ah, 'tis some moonstruck
creature after all !

Such fond fools as are like to haunt
this den :

They spread contagion, doubtless :
yet he seemed

To echo one foreboding of my heart
So truly, that . . . no matter ! How

he stands
With eve's last sunbeam staying on

his hair
Which turns to it, as if they were

akin :
And those clear smiling eyes of

saddest blue
Nearly set free, so far they rise above

The painful fruitless striving of that
brow

And enforced knowledge of those
lips, firm-set

In slow despondency's eternal sigh !
Has he, too, missed life's end, and

learned the cause ?)
Be calm, I charge thee, by thy fealty !

Tell me what thou wouldst be, and
what I am.

Apr. I would love infinitely, and
be loved.

First : I would carve in stone, or
cast in brass,

The forms of earth. No ancient
hunter, raised

Up to the gods by his renown ; no
nymph

Supposed the sweet soul of a wood-
 land tree,
 Or sapphirine spirit of a twilight star,
 Should be too hard for me ; no shep-
 herd-king,
 Regal with his white locks ; no youth
 who stands
 Silent and very calm amid the
 throng,
 His right hand ever hid beneath his
 robe
 Until the tyrant pass ; no law-giver ;
 No swan-soft woman, rubbed with
 lucid oils,
 Given by a god for love of her—too
 hard !
 Each passion sprung from man, con-
 ceived by man,
 Would I express and clothe it in its
 right form,
 Or blend with others struggling in
 one form,
 Or show repressed by an ungainly
 form.
 For, if you marvelled at some mighty
 spirit
 With a fit frame to execute his will—
 Ay, even unconsciously to work his
 will—
 You should be moved no less beside
 some strong,
 Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn
 body,
 Endeavouring to subdue it, and in-
 form it
 With its own splendour ! All this I
 would do,
 And I would say, this done, " God's
 sprites being made,
 " He grants to each a sphere to be its
 world,
 " Appointed with the various objects
 needed
 " To satisfy its spiritual desires ;
 " So, I create a world for these my
 shapes
 " Fit to sustain their beauty and
 their strength !"
 And, at the word, I would contrive
 and paint
 Woods, valleys, rocks, and plains,
 dells, sands, and wastes,

Lakes which, when morn breaks on
 their quivering bed,
 Blaze like a wyvern flying round the
 sun ;
 And ocean-isles so small, the dog-fish
 tracking
 A dead whale, who should find them,
 would swim thrice
 Around them, and fare onward—all
 to hold
 The offspring of my brain. Nor these
 alone—
 Bronze labyrinths, palace, pyramid,
 and crypt,
 Baths, galleries, courts, temples, and
 terraces,
 Marts, theatres, and wharfs—all filled
 with men !
 Men everywhere ! And this per-
 formed, in turn,
 When those who looked on, pined to
 hear the hopes,
 And fears, and hates, and loves which
 moved the crowd,—
 I would throw down the pencil as
 the chisel,
 And I would speak : no thought
 which ever stirred
 A human breast should be untold ;
 no passions,
 No soft emotions, from the turbulent
 stir
 Within a heart fed with desires like
 mine—
 To the last comfort, shutting the tired
 lids
 Of him who sleeps the sultry noon
 away
 Beneath the tent-tree by the way-side
 well :
 And this in language as the need
 should be,
 Now poured at once forth in a burning
 flow,
 Now piled up in a grand array of
 words.
 This done, to perfect and consummate
 all,
 Even as a luminous haze links star to
 star,
 I would supply all chasms with music,
 breathing

Did full resources wait on our good
will
At every turn. Let all be as it is.
Some say the earth is even so
contrived
That tree, and flower, a vesture gay,
conceal
A bare and skeleton framework : had
we means
That answered to our mind ! But
now I seem
Wrecked on a savage isle : how rear
thereon
My palace ? Branching palms the
props shall be,
Fruit glossy mingling ; gems are for
the east ;
Who heeds them ? I can waive them.
Serpents' scales,
Birds' feathers, downy furs, and
fishes' skins
Must help me ; and a little here and
there
Is all I can aspire to : still my art
Shall show its birth was in a gentler
clime.
" Had I green jars of malachite, this
way
" I'd range them : where those sea-
shells glisten above,
" Cressets should hang, by right : this
way we set
" The purple carpets, as these mats
are laid,
" Woven of mere fern and rush and
blossoming flag."
Or if, by fortune, some completer
grace
Be spared to me, some fragment,
some slight sample
Of my own land's completer work-
manship,
Some trifle little heeded there, but
here
The place's one perfection—with
what joy
Would I enshrine the relic—cheer-
fully
Foregoing all the marvels out of
reach !
Could I retain one strain of all the
psalm

Of the angels—one word of the fiat
of God—
To let my followers know what such
things are !
I would adventure nobly for their
sakes :
When nights were still, and still the
moaning sea,
And far away I could descry the
land
Whence I departed, whither I re-
turn,
I would dispart the waves, and stand
once more
At home, and load my bark, and
hasten back,
And fling my gains before them, rich
or poor—
“Friends,” I would say, “I went
far, far for them,
“Past the high rocks the haunt of
doves, the mounds
“Of red earth from whose sides
strange trees grow out,
“Past tracts of milk-white minute
blinding sand,
“Till, by a mighty moon, I trem-
blingly
“Gathered these magic herbs, berry
and bud,
“In haste—not pausing to reject the
weeds,
“But happy plucking them at any
price.
“To me, who have seen them bloom
in their own soil,
“They are scarce lovely : plait and
wear them, you !
“And guess, from what they are, the
springs that fed—
“The stars that sparkled o’er them,
night by night,
“The snakes that travelled far to sip
their dew !”
Thus for my higher loves ; and thus
even weakness
Would win me honour. But not these
alone
Should claim my care ; for common
life, its wants
And ways, would I set forth in beau-
tiful hues :

The lowest hind should not possess a
hope,
A fear, but I’d be by him, saying
better
Than he his own heart’s language. I
would live
For ever in the thoughts I thus ex-
plored,
As a discoverer’s memory is at-
tached
To all he finds : they should be mine
henceforth,
Imbued with me, though free to all
before ;
For clay, once cast into my soul’s rich
mine
Should come up crusted o’er with
gems : nor this
Would need a meaner spirit, than the
first :
Nay, ’twould be but the selfsame
spirit, clothed
In humbler guise, but still the self-
same spirit—
As one spring wind unbind, the
mountain snow,
And comforts violets in their hermit-
age.
But, master, poet, who hast done all
this,
How didst thou ’scape the ruin I have
met ?
Didst thou, when nerving thee to this
attempt,
Ne’er range thy mind’s extent, as
some wide hall,
Dazzled by shapes that filled its length
with light,
Shapes clustered there to rule thee,
not obey—
That will not wait thy summons, will
not rise
Singly, nor when thy practised eye
and hand
Can well transfer their loveliness, but
crowd
By thee for ever, bright to thy des-
pair ?
Didst thou ne’er gaze on each by
turns, and ne’er
Resolve to single out *one*, though the
rest

Should vanish, and to give that one,
entire
In beauty, to the world ; forgetting,
so,
Its peers, whose number baffles mortal
power ?
And, this determined, wert thou ne'er
seduced
By memories, and regrets, and
passionate love,
To glance once more farewell ? and
did their eyes
Fasten thee, brighter and more bright,
until
Thou couldst but stagger back unto
their feet,
And laugh that man's applause or
welfare once
Could tempt thee to forsake them ?
Or when years
Had passed, and still their love pos-
sessed thee wholly ;
When from without some murmur
startled thee
Of darling mortals, famished for
one ray
Of thy so-hoarded luxury of light,
Didst thou ne'er strive even yet to
break those spells,
And prove thou couldst recover and
fulfil
Thy early mission, long ago renounced,
And, to that end, select some shape
once more ?
And did not mist-like influences,
thick films,
Faint memories of the rest, that
charmed so long
Thine eyes, float fast, confuse thee,
bear thee off,
As whirling snow-drifts blind a man
who treads
A mountain ridge, with guiding spear,
through storm ?
Say, though I fell, I had excuse to
fall ;
Say, I was tempted sorely : say but
this,
Dear lord, Aprile's lord !
Par. Clasp me not thus,
Aprile ! . . . That the truth should
reach me thus !

We are weak dust. Nay, clasp not,
or I faint !

Apr. My king ! and envious
thoughts could outrage thee !

Lo, I forget my ruin, and re-
joice

In thy success, as thou ! Let our
God's praise

Go bravely through the world at
last ! What care

Through me or thee ? I feel thy
breath . . . why, tears ?

Tears in the darkness—and from thee
to me ?

Par. Love me henceforth, Aprile,
while I learn

To love, and, merciful God, forgive
us both !

We wake at length from weary
dreams ; but both

Have slept in fairy-land : though
dark and drear

Appears the world before us, we no
less

Wake with our wrists and ancles
jewelled still.

I, too, have sought to KNOW as thou
to LOVE—

Excluding love as thou refusedst
knowledge.

Still thou hast beauty and I, power.
We wake :

What penance canst devise for both
of us ?

Apr. I hear thee faintly . . . the
thick darkness ! Even

Thine eyes are hid. 'Tis as I knew :
I speak,

And now I die. But I have seen
thy face !

O, poet, think of me, and sing of
me !

But to have seen thee, and to die so
soon !

Par. Die not, Aprile : we must
never part.

Are we not halves of one dissevered
world,

Whom this strange chance unites
once more ? Part ? never !

Till thou, the lover, know ; and I,
the knower,

Love—until both are saved. Aprile,
hear!

We will accept our gains, and use
them—now!

God, he will die upon my breast!
Aprile!

Apr. To speak but once, and die!
yet by his side.

Hush! hush!

Ha! go you ever girt about
With phantoms, powers? I have
created such,

But these seem real as I!

Par. Whom can you see
Through the accursed darkness?

Apr. Stay; I know,
I know them: who should know
them well as I?—

White brows, lit up with glory;
poets all!

Par. Let him but live, and I have
my reward!

Apr. Yes; I see now—God is the
PERFECT POET,

Who in creation acts his own con-
ceptions.

Shall man refuse to be aught less
than God?

Man's weakness is his glory—for
the strength

Which raises him to heaven and near
God's self,

Came spite of it: God's strength his
glory is,

For thence came with our weakness
sympathy

Which brought God down to earth, a
man like us.

Had you but told me this at first!
... Hush! hush!

Par. Live! for my sake, because
of my great sin.

To help my brain, oppressed by these
wild words

And their deep import. Live! 'tis
not too late:

I have a quiet home for us, and
friends.

Michal shall smile on you ... Hear
you? Lean thus,

And breathe my breath: I shall not
lose one word

Of all your speech—no little word,
Aprile!

Apr. No, no ... Crown me? I
am not one of you!

'Tis he, the king, you seek. I am
not one ...

Par. Give me thy spirit, at least!
Let me love, too!

I have attained, and now I may de-
part.

III.—PARACELSUS.

SCENE—*A chamber in the house of
Paracelsus at Basil. 1526.*

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Par. Heap logs, and let the blaze
laugh out!

Fest. True, true!

'Tis very fit that all, time, chance,
and change

I have wrought since last we sate thus,
face to face,

And soul to soul—all cares, far-
looking fears,

Vague apprehensions, all vain fancies
bred

By your long absence, should be cast
away,

Forgotten in this glad unhop'd re-
newal

Of our affections.

Par. Oh, omit not aught
Which witnesses your own and
Michal's love!

I bade you not spare that! Forget
alone

The honours and the glories, and the
rest,

You seemed disposed to tell profusely
out.

Fest. Nay, even your honours, in a
sense, I waive:

The wondrous Paracelsus—Life's dis-
penser,

Fate's commissary, idol of the
schools,

And Courts, shall be no more than
Aureole still—

Still Aureole and my friend, as when
we parted

Some twenty years ago, and I
restrained

As I best could the promptings of my
spirit,

Which secretly advanced you, from
the first,

To the pre-eminent rank which,
since, your own

Adventurous ardour, nobly triumph-
ing,

Has won for you.

Par. Yes, yes; and Michal's
face

Still wears that quiet and peculiar
light,

Like the dim circlet floating round a
pearl?

Fest. Just so.

Par. And yet her calm sweet
countenance,

Though saintly, was not sad; for she
would sing

Alone . . . Does she still sing alone,
bird-like,

Not dreaming you are near? Her
carols dropt

In flakes through that old leafy bower
built under

The sunny wall at Würzburg, from
her lattice

Among the trees above, while I, un-
seen,

Sate conning some rare scroll from
Tritheim's shelves,

Much wondering notes so simple
could divert

My mind from study. Those were
happy days!

Respect all such as sing when all
alone.

Fest. Scarcely alone—her children,
you may guess,

Are wild beside her . . .

Par. Ah, those children quite
Unsettle the pure picture in my

mind:
A girl—she was so perfect, so dis-
tinct . . .

No change, no change! Not but this
added grace

May blend and harmonize with its
compeers,

And Michal may become her mother-
hood;

But 'tis a change—and I detest all
change,

And most a change in aught I loved
long since!

So, Michal . . . you have said she
thinks of me?

Fest. O very proud will Michal be
of you!

Imagine how we sate, long winter-
nights,

Scheming and wondering—shaping
your presumed

Adventures, or devising their re-
ward;

Shutting out fear with all the strength
of hope.

Though it was strange how, even
when most secure

In our domestic peace, a certain dim
And fitting shade could sadden all;

it seemed
A restlessness of heart, a silent
yearning,

A sense of something wanting, in-
complete—

Not to be put in words, perhaps
avoided

By mute consent—but, said or unsaid,
felt

To point to one so loved and so long
lost.

And then the hopes rose and shut out
the fears—

How you would laugh should I re-
count them now!

I still predicted your return at last
With gifts beyond the greatest vaunt

of all,

All Tritheim's wondrous troop; did
one of which

Attain renown by any chance, I
smiled—

As well aware of who would prove
his peer.

Michal was sure some woman, long
ere this,

As beautiful as you were sage, had
loved . . .

Par. Far-seeing, truly, to discern
so much

In the fantastic projects and day-
dreams

Of a raw, restless boy !

Fest. Say, one whose sunrise
Well warranted our faith in this full
noon !

Can I forget the anxious voice which
said,

"Festus, have thoughts like these
e'er shaped themselves

"In other brains than mine—have
their possessors

"Existed in like circumstance—were
they weak

"As I—or ever constant from the
first,

"Despising youth's allurements, and
rejecting

"As spider-films the shackles I
endure ?

"Is there hope for me?"—and I
answered grave

As an acknowledged elder, calmer,
wiser,

More gifted mortal. O you must
remember,

For all your glorious . . .

Par. Glorious? ay, this hair,
These hands—nay, touch them, they
are mine ! Recall

With all the sad recallings, times
when thus

To lay them by your own ne'er
turned you pale,

As now. Most glorious, are they not ?

Fest. Why . . . why . . .
Something must be subtracted from
success

So wide, no doubt. He would be
scrupulous, truly,

Who should object such drawbacks.
Still, still, Aureole,

You are changed—very changed !
'Twere losing nothing

To look well to it : you must not be
stolen

From the enjoyment of your well-won
meed.

Par. My friend ! you seek my
pleasure, past a doubt :

By talking, not of me, but of yourself,
You will best gain your point.

Fest. Have I not said
All touching Michal and my children ?

Sure

You know, by this, full well how
Aennchen looks

Gravely, while one disparts her thick
brown hair ;

And Aureole's glee when some stray
gannet builds

Amid the birch-trees by the lake.
Small hope

Have I that he will honour, the wild
imp,

His namesake ! Sigh not ! 'tis too
much to ask

That all we love should reach the
same proud fate.

But you are very kind to humour me
By showing interest in my quiet life ;

You, who of old could never tame
yourself

To tranquil pleasures, must at heart
despise . . .

Par. Festus, strange secrets are let
out by Death,

Who blabs so oft the follies of this
world :

And I am Death's familiar, as you
know.

I helped a man to die, some few
weeks since,

Warped even from his go-cart to one
end—

The living on princes' smiles, reflected
from

A mighty herd of favourites. No
mean trick

He left untried ; and truly well-nigh
wormed

All traces of God's finger out of him.
Then died, grown old ; and just an
hour before—

Having lain long with blank and
soulless eyes—

He sat up suddenly, and with natural
voice

Said, that in spite of thick air and
closed doors

God told him it was June ; and he
knew well,

Without such telling, hare-bells grew
in June;
And all that kings could ever give or
take
Would not be precious as those
blossoms to him.
Just so, allowing I am passing wise,
It seems to me much worthier argu-
ment
Why pansies,* eyes that laugh, bear
beauty's prize
From violets, eyes that dream—(your
Michal's choice)—
Than all fools find to wonder at in
me,
Or in my fortunes: and be very
sure
I say this from no prurient restless-
ness—
No self-complacency—itching to turn,
Vary, and view its pleasure from all
points,
And, in this matter, willing other
men
Should argue and demonstrate to it-
self
The realness of the very joy it tastes.
What joy is better than the news of
friends
Whose memories were a solace to me
oft,
As mountain-baths to wild fowls in
their flight?
Yes, rather than you wasted thought
on me
If you were sage, and rightly valued
bliss!
But there's no taming nor repressing
hearts:
God knows I need such!—So you
heard me speak?
Fest. Speak? when?
Par. When but this morning at
my class?
There was noise and crowd enough.
I saw you not.
Surely you know I am engaged to fill
The chair here?—that 'tis part of my
proud fate

* *Citrinula (flammula) herba Para-
celso multum familiaris* —DORN.

To lecture to as many thick-sculled
youths
As please, each day, to throng the
theatre,
To my great reputation, and no
small
Danger of Basil's benches, long un-
used
To crack beneath such honour?
Fest. I was there;
I mingled with the throng: shall I
avow
I had small care to listen?—too in-
tent
On gathering from the murmurs of
the crowd
A full corroboration of my hopes!
What can I learn about your powers?
but they
Know, care for nought beyond your
actual state—
Your actual value; and yet worship
you!
Those various natures whom you
sway as one!
But ere I go, be sure I shall attend . . .
Par. Stop, o' God's name: the
thing's by no means yet
Past remedy! Shall I read this
morning's work
—At least in substance? Nought so
worth the gaining
As an apt scholar! Thus then, with
all due
Precision and emphasis—(you, be-
sides, are clearly
Guiltless of understanding a whit
more
The subject than your stool—allowed
to be
A notable advantage) . . .
Fest. Surely,
Aureole,
You laugh at me!
Par. I laugh? Ha, ha!
thank heaven,
I charge you, if't be so! for I forget
Much—and what laughter should be
like! No less,
However, I forego that luxury,
Since it alarms the friend who brings
it back,

True, laughter like my own must echo
 strange
 To thinking men ; a smile were better
 far—
 So make me smile ! If the exulting
 look
 You wore but now be smiling, 'tis so
 long
 Since I have smiled ! Alas, such
 smiles are born
 Alone of hearts like yours, or shep-
 herds old
 Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as
 their flocks,
 Saw in the stars mere garnishry of
 heaven,
 In earth a stage for altars, nothing
 more.
 Never change, Festus : I say, never
 change !
Fest. My God, if he be wretched
 after all !
Par. When last we parted, Festus,
 you declared,
 —Or did your Michal's soft lips
 whisper words
 I have preserved ? She told me she
 believed
 I should succeed (meaning, that in
 the search
 I then engaged in, I should meet
 success),
 And yet be wretched : now, she
 augured false.
Fest. Thank heaven ! but you
 spoke strangely ! could I venture
 To think bare apprehension lest your
 friend,
 Dazzled by your resplendent course,
 might find
 Henceforth less sweetness in his own,
 awakes
 Such earnest mood in you ? Fear
 not, dear friend,
 That I shall leave you, inwardly
 repining
 Your lot was not my own !
Par. And this, for ever !
 For ever ! gull who may, they will
 be blind !
 They will not look nor think—'tis
 nothing new

In them ; but surely he is not of them !
 My Festus, do you know, I reckoned,
 you—
 Though all beside were sand-blind
 —you, my friend,
 Would look at me, once close, with
 piercing eye,
 Untroubled by the false glare that
 confounds
 A weaker vision ; would remain
 serene,
 Though singular, amid a gaping
 throng.
 I feared you, or had come, sure, long
 ere this,
 To Einsiedeln. Well, error has no
 end,
 And Rhasis is a sage, and Basil
 boasts
 A tribe of wits, and I am wise and
 blest
 Past all dispute ! 'Tis vain to fret
 at it.
 I have vowed long since that my
 worshippers
 Shall owe to their own deep sagacity.
 All further information, good or
 bad :
 And little risk my reputation runs,
 Unless perchance the glance now
 searching me
 Be fixed much longer—for it seems
 to spell,
 Dimly, the characters a simpler man
 Might read distinct enough. Old
 eastern books
 Say, the fallen prince of morning
 some short space
 Remained unchanged in feature—nay,
 his brow
 Seemed hued with triumph : every
 spirit then
 Praising ; *his* heart on flame the
 while :—a tale !
 Well, Festus, what discover you, I
 pray ?
Fest. Some foul deed sullies then
 a life which else
 Were raised supreme ?
Par. Good : I do well—most well !
 Why strive to make men hear, feel,
 fret themselves

With what 'tis past their power to comprehend?
 I would not strive now: only, having cursed
 The faint surmise that one yet walked the earth,
 Me, at least, not the utter fool of show,
 Not absolutely formed to be the dupe
 Of shallow plausibilities alone;
 One who, in youth found wise enough to choose
 The happiness his riper years approve,
 Was yet so anxious for another's sake,
 That, ere his friend could rush upon a course
 Mad, ruinous, the converse of his own,
 His gentler spirit essayed, prejudged for him
 The perilous path, foresaw its destiny,
 And warned the weak one in such tender words,
 Such accents—his whole heart in every tone—
 That oft their memory comforted that friend
 When rather it should have increased despair:
 —Having believed, I say, that this one man
 Could never lose the wisdom from the first
 His portion—how should I refuse to grieve
 At even my gain if it attest his loss,
 At triumph which so signally disturbs
 Our old relation, proving me more wise?
 Therefore, once more reminding him how well
 He prophesied, I note the single flaw
 That spoils his prophet's title: in plain words
 You were deceived, and thus were you deceived—
 I have not been successful, and yet am
 Most wretched; there—'tis said at last; but give
 No credit, lest you force me to concede
 That common sense yet lives upon the earth.

Fir. You surely do not mean to enter me?
Par. You know, or (if you have been wise enough
 To cleanse your memory of such matters) knew,
 As far as words of mine could make it clear,
 That 'twas my purpose to find joy or grief
 Solely in the fulfilment of my plan,
 Or plot, or whatsoe'er it was; rejoicing
 Alone as it proceeded prosperously,
 Sorrowing alone when any chance retarded
 Its progress. That was in those Würzburg days!
 Not to prolong a theme I thoroughly hate,
 I have pursued this plan with all my strength;
 And having failed therein most signally,
 Cannot object to ruin, utter and drear
 As all-excelling would have been the prize
 Had fortune favoured me. I scarce do right
 To vex your frank good spirit, late rejoiced
 By my supposed prosperity, I know,
 And, were I lucky in a glut of friends,
 Would well agree to let your error live.
 Nay, strengthen it with fables of success:
 But mine is no condition to refuse
 The transient solace of so rare a chance,
 My solitary luxury, my Festus—
 Accordingly I venture to put off
 The wearisome vest of falsehood galling me,
 Secure when he is by. I lay me bare,
 Prone at his mercy—but he is my friend!
 Not that he needs retain his aspect grave;
 That answers not my purpose; for 'tis like,
 Some sunny morning—Basil being drained

Of its wise population, every corner
Of the amphitheatre crammed with
learned clerks.

Here Ecclampadius, looking worlds
of wit,

Here Castellanus, as profound as he,
Munsterus here, Frobenius there, -
all squeezed,

And staring, and expectant,—then, I
say,

'Tis like that the poor zany of the
show,

Your friend, will choose to put his
trappings off

Before them, bid adieu to cap and
bells

And motley with a grace but seldom
judged

Expedient in such cases:—the grim
smile

That will go round! Is it not there-
fore best

To venture a rehearsal like the
present

In a small way? Where are the
signs I seek,

The first-fruits and fair sample of the
scorn

Due to all quacks? Why, this will
never do!

Fest. These are foul vapours,
Aureole; nought beside!

The effect of watching, study, wear-
iness.

Were there a spark of truth in the
confusion

Of these wild words, you would not
outrage thus

Your youth's companion. I shall
ne'er regard

These wanderings, bred of faintness
and much study.

You would not trust a trouble thus
to me,

To Michal's friend.

Par. I have said it,
dearest Festus!

The manner is ungracious, probably;
More may be told in broken sobs,

one day,

And scalding tears, ere long: but I
thought best

To keep that off as long as possible.
Do you wonder still?

Fest. No; it must oft fall out
That one whose labour perfects any
work,

Shall rise from it with eye so worn,
that he

Of all men least can measure the
extent

Of what he has accomplished. He
alone,

Who, nothing tasked, is nothing
weary too,

Can clearly scan the little he effects:
But we, the bystanders, untouched by
toil,

Estimate each aright.

Par. This worthy Festus
Is one of them, at last! 'Tis so with
all!

First, they set down all progress as a
dream,

And next, when he, whose quick dis-
comfiture

Was counted on, accomplishes some
few

And doubtful steps in his career,—
behold,

They look for every inch of ground
to vanish

Beneath his tread, so sure they judge
success!

Fest. Few doubtful steps? when
death retires before

Your presence—when the noblest of
mankind,

Broken in body, or subdued in mind,
May through your skill renew their

vigour, raise
The shattered frame to pristine state-
liness?

When men in racking pain may
purchase dreams

Of what delights them most—swoon-
ing at once

Into a sea of bliss, or rapt along
As in a flying sphere of turbulent

light?

When we may look to you as one
ordained

To free the flesh from fell disease, as
freed

Our Luther's burning tongue the
fettered soul?

When . . .

Par. Rather, when and where,
friend, did you get
This notable news?

Fest. Even from the common
voice:

From those whose envy, daring not
dispute

The wonders it decries, attributes
them

To magic and such folly.

Par. Folly? Why not
To magic, pray? You find a comfort
doubtless

In holding, God ne'er troubles him
about

Us or our doings: once we were
judged worth

The devil's tempting . . . I offend:
forgive me,

And rest content. Your prophecy on
the whole

Was fair enough as prophesyings go;

At fault a little in detail, but quite

Precise enough in the main; accord-
ingly

I pay due homage: you guessed long
ago

(The prophet!) I should fail—and I
have failed.

Fest. You mean to tell me, then,
the hopes which fed

Your youth have not been realised as
yet?

Some obstacle has barred them
hitherto?

Or that their innate . . .

Par. As I said but now,
You have a very decent prophet's
fame,

So you but shun details here. Little
matters

Whether those hopes were mad,—the
aims they sought,

Safe and secure from all ambitious
fools;

Or whether my weak wits are over-
come

By what a better spirit would scorn:
I fail.

And now methinks 'twere best to
change a theme,

I am a sad fool to have stumbled on.
I say confusedly what comes upper-
most;

But there are times when patience
proves at fault,

As now: this morning's strange en-
counter— you

Beside me once again! you, whom I
guessed

Alive, since hitherto (with Luther's
leave)

No friend have I among the saints at
rest,

To judge by any good their prayers
effect—

I knew you would have helped me!—
So would He,

My strange competitor in enter-
prise,

Bound for the same end by another
path,

Arrived, or ill or well, before the
time,

At our disastrous journey's doubtful
close—

How goes it with Aprile? Ah, your
heaven

Receives not into its beatitudes

Mere martyrs for the world's sake;
heaven shuts fast:

The poor mad poet is howling by this
time!

Since you are my sole friend then,
here or there,

I could not quite repress the varied
feelings

This meeting wakens; they have had
their vent,

And now forget them. Do the rear-
mice still

Hang like a fret-work on the gate (or
what

In my time was a gate) fronting the
road

From Einsiedeln to Lachen?

Fest. Trifle not!
Answer me—for my sake alone. You
smiled

Just now, when I supposed some deed,
unworthy

Yourself might blot the else so bright
 result ;
 Yet if your motives have continued
 pure,
 Your earnest will unfaltering, if you
 still
 Remain unchanged, and if, in spite of
 this,
 You have experienced a defeat that
 proves
 Your aims for ever unattainable—
 I say not, you would cheerfully resign
 The contest—mortal hearts are not so
 fashioned—
 But sure you would resign it, ne'erthe-
 less.
 You sought not fame, nor gain, nor
 even love ;
 No end distinct from knowledge,—I
 repeat
 Your very words : once satisfied that
 knowledge
 Is a mere dream, you would announce
 as much,
 Yourself the first. But how is the
 event ?
 You are defeated—and I find you
 here !
 Par. As though " here " did not
 signify defeat !
 I spoke not of my little labours here—
 But of the break-down of my general
 aims :
 That you, aware of their extent and
 scope,
 Should look on these sage lecturings,
 approved
 By beardless boys, and bearded
 dotards,—these
 As a fit consummation of such aims,
 Is worthy notice ! A professorship
 At Basil ! Since you see so much in
 it,
 And think my life was reasonably
 drained
 Of life's delights to render me a match
 For duties arduous as such post de-
 mands,—
 Far be it from me to deny my power
 To fill the petty circle lotted out
 From infinite space, or justify the
 host

Of honours thence accruing : so, take
 notice,
 This jewel dangling from my neck
 preserves
 The features of a prince, my skill re-
 stored
 To plague his people some few years
 to come :
 And all through a pure whim. He
 had eased the earth
 For me, but that the droll despair
 which seized
 The vermin of his household, tickled
 me.
 I came to see : here, drivelled the
 physician,
 Whose most infallible nostrum was at
 fault ;
 There quaked the astrologer, whose
 horoscope
 Had promised him interminable
 years ;
 Here a monk fumbled at the sick
 man's mouth
 With some undoubted relic—a sudary
 Of the Virgin ; while some other
 dozen knaves
 Of the same brotherhood (he loved
 them ever)
 Were actively preparing 'neath his
 nose
 Such a suffumigation as, once fired,
 Had stunk the patient dead ere he
 could groan.
 I cursed the doctor, and upset the
 brother ;
 Brushed past the conjurer ; vowed
 that the first gust
 Of stench from the ingredients just
 alight
 Would raise a cross-grained devil in
 my sword,
 Not easily laid ; and ere an hour, the
 prince
 Slept as he never slept since prince
 he was.
 A day—and I was posting for my
 life,
 Placarded through the town as one
 whose spite
 Had near availed to stop the blessed
 effects

Of the doctor's nostrum, which, well
 seconded
 By the sudary, and more the costly
 smoke—
 Not leaving out the strenuous prayers
 sent up
 Hard by, in the abbey—raised the
 prince to life;
 To the great reputation of the seer,
 Who, confident, expected all along
 The glad event—the doctor's recom-
 pense—
 Much largess from his highness to the
 monks—
 And the vast solace of his loving
 people,
 Whose general satisfaction to increase,
 The prince was pleased no longer to
 defer
 The burning of some dozen heretics.
 Remanded 'till God's mercy should
 be shown
 Touching his sickness, as a prudent
 pledge
 To make it surer: last of all were
 joined
 Ample directions to all loyal folk
 To swell the complement, by seizing
 me
 Who—doubtless some rank sorcerer
 — had endeavoured
 To thwart these pious offices, ob-
 struct
 The prince's cure, and frustrate
 Heaven, by help
 Of certain devils dwelling in his
 sword.
 By luck, the prince in his first fit of
 thanks
 Had forced this bauble on me as an
 earnest
 Of further favours. This one case
 may serve
 To give sufficient taste of many
 such,
 So let them pass: those shelves sup-
 port a pile
 Of patents, licenses, diplomas, titles,
 From Germany, France, Spain, and
 Italy:
 They authorise some honour: ne'er-
 theless,

I set more store by this Erasmus
 sent;
 He trusts me; our Frobenius is his
 friend,
 And him "I raised" (nay, read it)
 "from the dead" . . .
 I weary you, I see; I merely sought
 To show, there's no great wonder
 after all
 That while I fill the class-room, and
 attract
 A crowd to Basil, I get leave to
 stay;
 And therefore need not scruple to
 accept
 The utmost they can offer—if I
 please:
 For 'tis but right the world should be
 prepared
 To treat with favour e'en fantastic
 wants
 Of one like me, used up in serving
 her.
 Just as the mortal, whom the Gods in
 part
 Devoured, received in place of his
 lost limb
 Some virtue or other—cured disease,
 I think;
 You mind the fables we have read to-
 gether.
Fest. You do not think I compre-
 hend a word:
 The time was, Aureole, you were apt
 enough
 To clothe the airiest thoughts in
 specious breath;
 But surely you must feel how vague
 and strange
 These speeches sound.
Par. Well, then: you know my
 hopes;
 I am assured, at length, those hopes
 were vain;
 That truth is just as far from me as
 ever;
 That I have thrown my life away;
 that sorrow
 On that account is vain, and further
 effort
 To mend and patch what's marred
 beyond repairing,

As useless : and all this was taught
to me
By the convincing, good old-fashioned
method
Of force—by sheer compulsion. Is
that plain?
Fest. Dear Aureole ! you confess
my fears were just ?
God wills not . . .
Par. Now, 'tis this I most admire—
The constant talk men of your stamp
keep up
Of God's will, as they style it ; one
would swear
Man had but merely to uplift his eye,
To see the will in question charactered
On the heaven's vault. 'Tis hardly
wise to moot
Such topics : doubts are many and
faith is weak.
I know as much of any will of God's,
As knows some dumb and tortured
brute what Man,
His stern lord, wills from the per-
plexing blows
That plague him every way, and
there, of course,
Where least he suffers, longest he
remains—
My case ; and for such reasons I
plod on,
Subdued, but not convinced. I know
as little
Why I deserve to fail, as why I hoped
Better things in my youth. I simply
know
I am no master here, but trained and
beaten
Into the path I tread ; and here I
stay,
Until some further intimation reach
me,
Like an obedient drudge : though I
prefer
To view the whole thing as a task
imposed,
Which, whether dull or pleasant,
must be done—
Yet, I deny not, there is made pro-
vision
Of joys which tastes less jaded might
affect ;

Nay, some which please me too, for
all my pride—
Pleasures that once were pains : the
iron ring
Festering about a slave's neck grows
at length
Part of the flesh it eats. I hate no
more
A host of petty, vile delights, un-
dreamed of
Or spurned, before ; such now supply
the place
Of my dead aims : as in the autumn
woods
Where tall trees used to flourish, from
their roots
Springs up a fungous brood, sickly
and pale,
Chill mushrooms, coloured like a
corpse's cheek.
Fest. If I interpret well what words
I seize,
It troubles me but little that your
aims,
Vast in their dawning, and most
likely grown
Extravagantly since, have baffled you.
Perchance I am glad ; you merit
greater praise ;
Because they are too glorious to be
gained,
You do not blindly cling to them and
die ;
You fell, but have not sullenly refused
To rise, because an angel worsted
you
In wrestling, though the world holds
not your peer
And though too harsh and sudden is
the change
To yield content as yet—still, you
pursue
The ungracious path as though 'twere
rosy-strewn.
'Tis well : and your reward, or soon
or late,
Will come from Him whom no man
serves in vain.
Par. Ah, very fine ! For my part,
I conceive
The very pausing from all further
toil,

Which you find heinous, would be as
 a seal
 To the sincerity of all my deeds.
 To be consistent I should die at
 once ;
 I calculated on no after-life ;
 Yet (how crept in, how fostered, I
 know not)
 Here am I with as passionate regret
 For youth, and health, and love so
 vainly lost,
 As if their preservation had been first
 And foremost in my thoughts ; and
 this strange fact
 Humbled me wondrously, and had
 due force
 In rendering me the more disposed
 to follow
 A certain counsel, a mysterious warn-
 ing—
 You will not understand—but 'twas
 a man
 With aims not mine, but yet pursued
 like mine,
 With the same fervor and no more
 success,
 Who perished in my sight ; but sum-
 moned me
 As I would shun the ghastly fate I
 saw,
 To serve my race at once ; to wait
 no longer
 'Till God should interfere in my
 behalf,
 And let the next world's knowledge
 dawn on this ;
 But distrust myself, put pride
 away,
 And give my gains, imperfect as
 they were,
 To men. I have not leisure to ex-
 plain
 How since, a strange succession of
 events
 Has raised me to the station you
 behold,
 Wherein I seem to turn to most ac-
 count
 The mere wreck of the past,—perhaps
 receive
 Some feeble glimmering token that
 God views

And may approve my penance ; there-
 fore here
 You find me—doing most good or
 least harm :
 And if folks wonder much and profit
 little
 'Tis not my fault ; only, I shall
 rejoice
 When my part in the farce is shuffled
 through,
 And the curtain falls ; I must hold
 out 'till then.
Fest. 'Till when, dear Aureole ?
Par. 'Till I'm fairly thrust
 From my proud eminence. Fortune
 is fickle
 And even professors fall : should that
 arrive,
 I see no sin in ceding to my bent.
 You little fancy what rude shocks
 apprise us
 We sin : God's intimations rather fail
 In clearness than in energy : 'twere
 well
 Did they but indicate the course to
 take
 Like that to be forsaken. I would
 fain
 Be spared a further sample ! Here I
 stand,
 And here I stay, be sure, till forced
 to flit.
Fest. Remain but firm on that head ;
 long ere then
 All I expect will come to pass, I
 trust :
 The cloud that wraps you will have
 disappeared.
 Meantime, I see small chance of such
 event :
 They praise you here as one whose
 lore, divulged
 Already, eclipses all the past can
 show,
 But whose achievements, marvellous
 as they be,
 Are faint anticipations of a glory
 About to be revealed. When Basil's
 crowds
 Dismiss their teacher, I shall be
 content
 That he depart.

Par. This favour at their hands
 I look for earlier than your view of
 things
 Would warrant. Of the crowd you
 saw to-day
 Remove the full half sheer amaze-
 ment draws,
 The novelty, nought else; and next,
 the tribe
 Whose innate blockish dullness just
 perceives
 That unless miracles (as seem my
 works)
 Be wrought in their behalf, their
 chance is slight
 To puzzle the devil; next, the numer-
 ous set
 Who bitterly hate established schools,
 so help
 The teacher that oppugns them, and
 o'erthrows,
 'Till having planted his own doctrine,
 he
 May reckon on their rancour in his
 turn;
 Take, too, the sprinkling of sagacious
 knaves
 Whose cunning runs not counter to
 the vogue,
 But seeks, by flattery and nursing
 craft,
 To force my system to a premature
 Short-lived development . . . Why
 swell the list?
 Each has his end to serve, and his
 best way
 Of serving it: remove all these,
 remains
 A scantling—a poor dozen at the
 best—
 That really come to learn for learn-
 ing's sake;
 Worthy to look for sympathy and
 service,
 And likely to draw profit from my
 pains.

Fest. 'Tis no encouraging picture:
 still these few

Redeem their fellows. Once implant
 the germ,

Its growth, if slow, is sure.

Par. God grant it so!

I would make some amends: but if I
 fail,

The luckless rogues have this excuse
 to urge,

That much is in my method and my
 manner,

My uncouth habits, my impatient
 spirit,

Which hinders of reception and re-
 sult

My doctrine: much to say, small
 skill to speak!

Those old aims suffered not a looking-
 off,

Though for an instant; therefore,
 only when

I thus renounced them and resolved
 to reap

Some present fruit—to teach mankind
 some truth

So dearly purchased—only then I
 found

Such teaching was an art requiring
 cares

And qualities peculiar to itself;
 That to possess was one thing—to

display,
 Another. Had renown been in my
 thoughts,

Or popular praise, I had soon dis-
 covered it!

One grows but little apt to learn
 these things.

Fest. If it be so, which nowise I
 believe,

There needs no waiting fuller dis-
 pensation

To leave a labour to so little use:
 Why not throw up the irksome

charge at once?

Par. A task, a task! . . .
 But wherefore hide from you

The whole extent of degradation,
 once

Engaged in the confession? Spite
 of all

My fine talk of obedience, and re-
 pugnance,

Docility, and what not, 'tis yet to
 learn

If when the old task really is per-
 formed,

And my will free once more, to
 choose a new,
 I shall do aught but slightly modify
 The nature of the hated one I quit.
 In plain words, I am spoiled: my
 life still tends
 As first it tended. I am broken and
 trained
 To my old habits; they are part of
 me.
 I know, and none so well, my darling
 ends
 Are proved impossible: no less, no
 less,
 Even now what humours me, fond
 fool, as when
 Their faint ghosts sit with me, and
 flatter me,
 And send me back content to my
 dull round?
 How can I change this soul?—this
 apparatus
 Constructed solely for their purposes
 So well adapted to their every want,
 To search out and discover, prove
 and perfect;
 This intricate machine, whose most
 minute,
 Least obvious motions have their
 charm to me
 Though to none else—an aptitude I
 seize,
 An object I perceive, a use, a mean-
 ing,
 A property, a fitness, I explain,
 And I alone :—how can I change my
 soul?
 And this wronged body, worthless
 save when tasked
 Under that soul's dominion—used to
 care
 For its bright master's cares, and
 quite subdued
 Its proper cravings—not to ail, nor
 pine,
 So the soul prosper—whither drag
 this poor,
 Tried, patient body? God! how I
 essayed,
 To live like that mad poet, for a
 while,
 To catch Aprile's spirit, as I hoped,

And love alone! and how I felt too
 warped
 And twisted and deformed! What
 should I do,
 Even tho' released from drudgery,
 but return
 Faint, as you see, and halting, blind
 and sore,
 To my old life—and die as I begun!
 I cannot feed on beauty, for the sake
 Of beauty only; nor can drink in
 balm
 From lovely objects for their loveli-
 ness;
 My nature cannot lose her first
 intent;
 I still must hoard, and heap, and
 class all truths
 With one ulterior purpose; I must
 know!
 Would God translate me to his
 throne, believe
 That I should only listen to his
 words
 To further my own aims! For other
 men,
 Beauty is prodigally strewn around,
 And I were happy could I quench as
 they
 This mad and thriveless longing, be
 content
 With beauty for itself alone: alas!
 I have addressed a frock of heavy
 mail,
 Yet may not join the troop of sacred
 knights;
 And now the forest-creatures fly from
 me,
 The grass-banks cool, the sunbeams
 warm no more!
 Best follow, dreaming that ere night
 arrives
 I shall o'ertake the company, and
 ride
 Glittering as they!
Fest. I think I apprehend
 What you would say: if you, in
 truth, design
 To enter once more on the life thus
 left,
 Seek not to hide that all this con-
 sciousness

Of failure is assumed.

Par. My friend, my friend,
I speak, you listen; I explain, per-
haps

You understand: there our com-
munion ends.

Have you learnt nothing from to-day's
discourse?

When we would thoroughly know the
sick man's state

We feel awhile the fluttering pulse,
press soft

The hot brow, look upon the languid
eye,

And thence divine the rest. Must I
lay bare

My heart, hideous and beating, or
tear up

My vitals for your gaze, ere you will
deem

Enough made known? You! who
are you, forsooth?

That is the crowning operation
claimed

By the arch-demonstrator—heaven
be hall.

Earth the audience. Let Aprile
d you

good places—'twill be worth
our while.

Are you mad, Aureole?
What can I have said

all for this? I judged from your
own words.

Oh true! A fevered wretch
scribes the ape

mock him from the bed-foot,
and turn

Alas! either at once: or he

The perilous journey he has late per-
formed.

And you are puzzled much how that
could be!

You find me here, half stupid and
half mad:

It makes no part of my delight to
search

Into these things, much less to under-
go

Another's scrutiny; but so it
chances

That I am led to trust my state to
you:

And the event is, you combine, con-
trast,

And ponder on my foolish words, as
though

They thoroughly conveyed all hidden
here—

Here, loathsome with despair, and
hate, and rage!

Is there no fear, no shrinking, or no
shame?

Will you guess nothing? will you
spare me nothing?

Must I go deeper? Aye or no?
Fest. Dear friend . . .

Par. True: I am brutal—'tis a
part of it;

The plague's sign—you are not a
lazar-haunter,

How should you know? Well then,
you think it strange

I should profess to have failed utterly,
And yet propose an ultimate return

To courses void of hope: and this,
because

You know not what temptation is,
nor how

'Tis like to ply men in the sickliest
part.

You are to understand, that we who
make

Sport for the gods, are hunted to the
end:

There is not one sharp volley shot at
us,

Which if we manage to escape with
life,

Though touched and hurt, we straight
may slacken pace

And gather by the way-side herbs and
roots

To staunch our wounds, secure from
further harm:—

No; we are chased to life's extremest
verge.

It will be well indeed if I return,
A harmless busy fool, to my old ways!

I would forget hints of another fate,
Significant enough, which silent hours

Have lately scared me with.
Fest. Another! and what?

Par. After all, Festus, you say
well: I stand
A man yet—I need never humble me.
I would have been—something, I
know not what;
But though I cannot soar, I do not
crawl:
There are worse portions than this
one of mine;
You say well!

Fest. Ah! . . .

Par. And deeper degradation!
If the mean stimulants of vulgar
praise,
And vanity, should become the chosen
food
Of a sunk mind; should stifle even
the wish
To find its early aspirations true;
Should teach it to breathe falsehood
like life-breath—
An atmosphere of craft, and trick,
and lies;
Should make it proud to emulate or
surpass
Base natures in the practices which
woke
Its most indignant loathing once . . .
No, no!

Utter damnation is reserved for Hell!
I had immortal feelings—such shall
never

Be wholly quenched—no, no!

My friend, you wear
A melancholy face, and truth to
speak,

There's little cheer in all this dismal
work;

But 'twas not my desire to set abroad
Such memories and forebodings. I
foresaw

Where they would drive; 'twere
better you detailed

News of Lucerne or Zurich; or I
described

Great Egypt's flaring sky, or Spain's
cork-groves.

Fest. I have thought now: yes,
this mood will pass away.

I know you, and the lofty spirit you
bear,

And easily ravel out a clue to all.

These are the trials meet for such as
you,

Nor must you hope exemption: to be
mortal

Is to be plied with trials manifold.

Look round! The obstacles which
kept the rest

Of men from your ambition, you
have spurned;

Their fears, their doubts, the chains
that bind them best,

Were flax before your resolute soul,
which nought

Avails to awe, save these delusions,
bred

From its own strength, its selfsame
strength, disguised—

Mocking itself. Be brave, dear
Aureole! Since

The rabbit has his shade to frighten
him,

The fawn his rustling bough, mortals
their cares,

And higher natures yet their power
to laugh

At these entangling fantasies, as
you

At trammels of a weaker intellect.

Measure your mind's height by the
shade it casts!

I know you.

Par. And I know you,
dearest Festus!

And how you love unworthily; and
how

All admiration renders blind.

Fest. You hold
That admiration blinds?

Par. Aye, and alas!

Fest. Nought blinds you less than
admiration will.

Whether it be that all love renders
wise

In its degree; from love which
blends with love—

Heart answering heart—to love which
spends itself

In silent mad idolatry of some

Pre-eminent mortal, some great soul
of souls,

Which ne'er will know how well it is
adored:

I say, such love is never blind ; but
 rather
 Alive to every the minutest spot
 Which mars its object, and which hate
 (supposed
 So vigilant and searching) dreams not
 of :
 Love broods on such : what then ?
 When first perceived
 Is there no sweet strife to forget, to
 change,
 To overflush those blemishes with all
 The glow of general goodness they
 disturb ?
 —To make those very defects an end-
 less source
 Of new affection grown from hopes
 and fears ?
 And, when all fails, is there no
 gallant stand
 Made even for much proved weak ?
 no shrinking-back
 Lest, rising even as its idol sinks,
 It nearly reach the sacred place, and
 stand
 Almost a rival of that idol ? Trust
 me,
 If there be fiends who seek to work
 our hurt,
 To ruin and drag down earth's
 mightiest spirits,
 Even at God's foot, 'twill be from
 such as love,
 Their zeal will gather most to serve
 their cause ;
 And least from those who hate, who
 most essay
 By contumely and scorn to blot the
 light
 Which will have entrance even to
 their hearts ;
 For thence will our Defender tear the
 veil
 And show within each heart, as in a
 shrine,
 The giant image of Perfection, grown
 In hate's despite, whose calumnies
 were spawned
 In the untroubled presence of its
 eyes !
 True admiration blinds not ; nor am I
 So blind : I call your sin exceptional ;

It springs from one whose life has
 passed the bounds
 Prescribed to life. Compound that
 fault with God !
 I speak of men ; to common men like
 me
 The weakness you confess endears
 you more—
 Like the far traces of decay in suns :
 I bid you have good cheer !
Par. Præclare ! Optimè !
 Think of a quiet mountain-cloister'd
 priest
 Instructing Paracelsus ! yet, 'tis so.
 Come, I will show you where my
 merit lies.
 'Tis in the advance of individual
 minds
 That the slow crowd should ground
 their expectation
 Eventually to follow—as the sea
 Waits ages in its bed, 'till some one
 wave
 Out of the multitude aspires, extends
 The empire of the whole, some feet
 perhaps,
 Over the strip of sand which could
 confine
 Its fellows so long time : thenceforth
 the rest,
 Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,
 And so much is clear gained. I shall
 be glad
 If all my labours, failing of aught else,
 Suffice to make such inroad, and pro-
 cure
 A wider range for thought : nay, they
 do this ;
 For, whatso'er my notions of true
 knowledge
 And a legitimate success, may be,
 I am not blind to my undoubted rank
 When classed with others : I precede
 my age :
 And whoso wills, is very free to mount
 These labours as a platform, whence
 their own
 May have a prosperous outset : but,
 alas !
 My followers—they are noisy as you
 heard,
 But for intelligence—the best of them

So clumsily wield the weapons I
supply

And they extol, that I begin to doubt
Whether their own rude clubs and
pebble-stones

Would not do better service than my
arms

Thus vilely swayed—if error will
not fall

Sooner before the old awkward batter-
ings

Than my more subtle warfare, not
half learned.

Fest. I would supply that art, then,
and withhold

Its arms until you have taught their
mystery.

Par. Content you, 'tis my wish ; I
have recourse

To the simplest training. Day by
day I seek

To wake the mood, the spirit which
alone

Can make those arms of any use to
men.

Of course, they are for swaggering
forth at once

Graced with Ulysses' club, Achilles'
shield—

Flash on us, all in armour, thou
Achilles !

Make our hearts dance to thy resound-
ing step !

A proper sight to scare the crows
away !

Fest. Pity you choose not, then,
some other method

Of coming at your point. The
marvellous art

At length established in the world
bids fair

To remedy all hindrances like these :
Trust to Frobenius' press the precious
lore

Obscured by uncouth manner, or
unfit

For raw beginners ; let his types secure
A deathless monument to after-times ;

Meanwhile wait confidently and enjoy
The ultimate effect : sooner or later,

You shall be all-revealed.

Par. The old dull question

In a new form ; no more. Thus : I
possess

Two sorts of knowledge ; one,—vast,
shadowy,

Hints of the unbounded aim I once
pursued :

The other consists of many secrets,
learned

While bent on nobler prize,—perhaps
a few

First principles which may conduct to
much :

These last I offer to my followers here.
Now bid me chronicle the first of
these,

My ancient study, and in effect you
bid me

Revert to the wild courses just ab-
jured :

I must go find them scattered through
the world.

Then, for the principles, they are so
simple

(Being chiefly of the overturning sort),
That one time is as proper to pro-
pound them

As any other—to-morrow at my class,
Or half a century hence embalmed in
print :

For if mankind intend to learn at all,
They must begin by giving faith to
them,

And acting on them ; and I do not
see

But that my lectures serve indifferent
well :

No doubt these dogmas fall not to the
earth,

For all their novelty and rugged set-
ting.

I think my class will not forget the
day

I let them know the gods of Israel,
Actius, Oribasius, Galen, Rhasis,

Serapion, Avicenna, Averroës,—
Were blocks !

Fest. And that reminds me,
I heard something

About your waywardness : you burned
their books,

It seems, instead of answering those
sages.

Par. And who said that?

Fest. Some I met yesternight
With Eccolampadius. As you know,
the purpose
Of this short stay at Basil was to
learn

His pleasure touching certain missives
sent

For our Zuinglius and himself. 'Twas
he

Apprized me that the famous teacher
here

Was my old friend.

Par. Ah, I forgot: you went . . .

Fest. From Zurich with advices for
the ear

Of Luther, now at Wittemberg—(you
know,

I make no'doubt, the differences of late
With Carolostadius)—and returning
sought

Basil and . . .

Par. I remember. Here's a
case, now,

Will teach you why I answer not, but
burn

The books you mention: pray, does
Luther dream

His arguments convince by their own
force

The crowds that own his doctrine?
No, indeed:

His plain denial of established points
Ages had sanctified and men sup-
posed

Could never be oppugned while earth
was under

And heaven above them—points which
chance, or time

Affected not—did more than the array
Of argument which followed. Boldly
deny!

There is much breath-stopping, hair-
stiffening

Awhile; then, amazed glances, mute
awaiting

The thunderbolt which does not
come; and next,

Reproachful wonder and inquiry:
those

Who else had never stirred, are able
now

To find the rest out for themselves—
perhaps

To outstrip him who set the whole at
work,

—As never will my wise class its in-
structor.

And you saw Luther?

Fest. 'Tis a wondrous soul!

Par. True: the so-heavy chain
which galled mankind

Is shattered, and the noblest of us all
Must bow to the deliverer—nay, the

worker
Of our own projects—we who long
before

Had burst its trammels, but forgot
the crowd,

We should have taught, still groaned
beneath the load:

This he has done and nobly. Speed
that may!

Whatever be my chance or my des-
pair,

What benefits mankind must glad me
too:

And men seem made, though not as I
believed,

For something better than the times
produce:

Witness these gangs of peasants your
new lights

From Suabia have possessed, whom
Munzer leads,

And whom the duke, the landgrave,
and the elector

Will calm in blood! Well, well—
'tis not my world!

Fest. Hark!

Par. 'Tis the melancholy
wind astir

Within the trees; the embers too are
grey,

Morn must be near.

Fest. Best ope the casement: see,
The night, late strewn with clouds

and flying stars,
Is blank and motionless: how peace-
ful sleep

The tree-tops all together! Like an
asp,

The wind slips whispering from
bough to bough.

Par. Ay; you would gaze on a
wind-shaken tree

By the hour, nor count time lost.

Fest. So you shall gaze :
Those happy times will come
again. . .

Par. Gone ! gone !
Those pleasant times ! Does not the
moaning wind

Seem to bewail that we have gained
such gains

And bartered sleep for them ?

Fest. It is our trust
That there is yet another world to
mend

All error and mischance.

Par. Another world !
And why this world, this common
world, to be

A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair
soever,

To some fine life to come ? Man
must be fed

With angel's food, forsooth ; and
some few traces

Of a diviner nature which look out
Through his corporeal baseness,
warrant him

In a supreme contempt for all pro-
vision

For his inferior tastes—some strag-
gling marks

Which constitute his essence, just as
truly

As here and there a gem would con-
stitute

The rock, their barren bed, a diamond.
But were it so—were man all mind—
he gains

A station little enviable. From God
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,
Intelligence exists which casts our
mind

Into immeasurable shade. No, no :
Love, hope, fear, faith—these make
humanity ;

These are its sign, and note, and
character ;

And these I have lost !—gone, shut
from me for ever,

Like a dead friend, safe from unkind-
ness more !

See morn at length. The heavy
darkness seems

Diluted ; grey and clear without the
stars ;

The shrubs bestir and rouse them-
selves, as if

Some snake, that weighed them down
all night, let go

His hold ; and from the east, fuller
and fuller

Day, like a mighty river, is flowing
in ;

But clouded, wintry, desolate, and
cold :

Yet see how that broad, prickly, star-
shaped plant,

Half down in the crevice, spreads its
woolly leaves,

All thick and glistening with diamond
dew.

And you depart for Einsiedeln this
day :

And we have spent all night in talk
like this !

If you would have me better for your
love,

Revert no more to these sad themes.

Fest. One favour,
And I have done. I leave you,
deeply moved ;

Unwilling to have fared so well, the
while

My friend has changed so sorely : if
this mood

Shall pass away—if light once more
arise

Where all is darkness now—if you
see fit

To hope, and trust again, and strive
again ;

You will remember—not our love
alone—

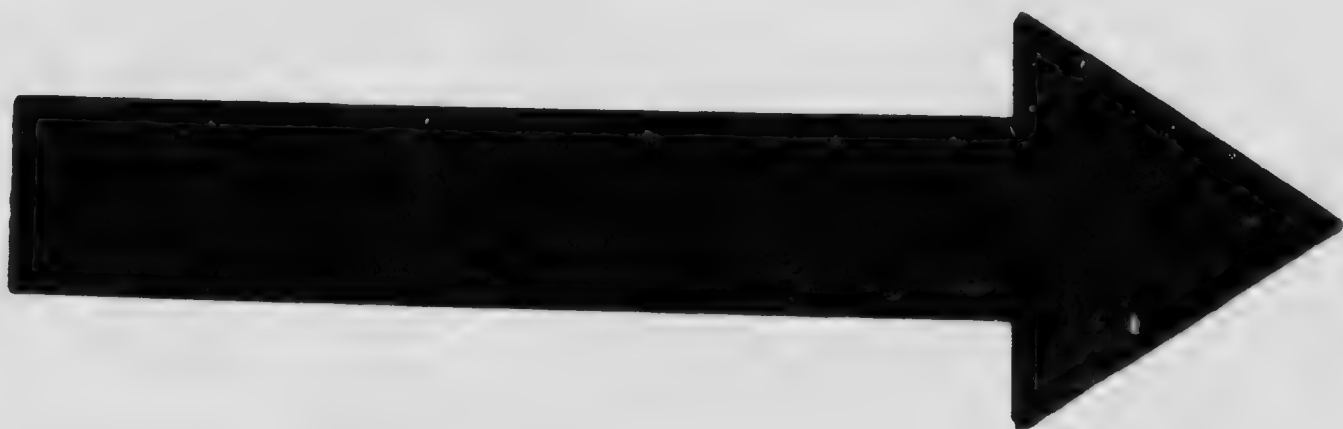
But that my faith in God's desire for
man

To trust on his support (as I must
think

You trusted), is obscured and dim
through you ;

For you are thus, and this is no
reward.

Will you not call me to your side,
dear friend ?

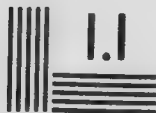


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ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2



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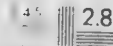
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IV. PARACELSUS ASPIRES.

SCENE.—*A House at Colmar, in Alsatia. 1528.*

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Par. (To John Oporinus, his secretary.) Sic ilur ad astra! Dear Von Visenburg

Is scandalised, and poor Torinus paralysed,

And every honest soul that Basil holds

Aghast; and yet we live, as one may say,

Just as though Liechtenfels had never set

So true a value on his sorry carcass,

And learned Pütter had not frowned us dumb.

We live; and shall as surely start to-morrow

For Nuremburg, as we drink speedy scathe

To Basil in this mantling wine, suffused

With a delicate blush—no fainter tinge is born

I' th' shut heart of a bud: pledge me, good John—

“Basil; a hot plague ravage it, with Pütter

“To stop the plague!” Even so? Do you too share

Their panic—the reptiles? Ha, ha; faint through *them*,

Desist for *them*!—while means enough exist

To bow the stoutest braggart of the tribe

Once more in crouching silence—means to breed

A stupid wonder in each fool again, Now big with admiration at the skill

Which stript a vain pretender of his plumes;

And, that done, means to brand each slavish brow

So deeply, surely, ineffaceably,

That thenceforth flattery shall not pucker it

Out of the furrow of that hideous stamp Which shows the next they fawn on,

what they are, This Basil with its magnates one and all,

Whom I curse soul and limb. And now dispatch,

Dispatch, my trusty John; and what remains

To do, whate'er arrangements for our trip

Are yet to be completed, see you hasten

This night; we'll weather the storm at least: to-morrow

For Nuremburg! Now leave us; this grave clerk

Has divers weighty matters for my ear (*Oporinus goes out*),

And spare my lungs. At last, my gallant Festus,

I am rid of this arch-knave that follows me

As a gaunt crow a gasping sheep; at last

May give a loose to my delight. How kind,

How very kind, my first, best, only friend!

Why this looks like fidelity. Embrace me:

Not a hair silvered yet! Right: you shall live

Till I am worth your love; you shall be proud,

And I—but let time show. Did you not wonder?

I sent to you because our compact weighed

Upon my conscience—(you recal the night

At Basil, which the gods confound)—because

Once more I aspire! I call you to my side;

You come. You thought my messenger strange?

Fest. So strange

That I must hope, indeed, your messenger

Has mingled his own fancies with the words

Purporting to be yours.

Par. He said no more,
'Tis probable, than the precious folks
I leave

Said fifty-fold more roughly. Well-a-day,

'Tis true; poor Paracelsus is exposed
At last; a most egregious quack he
proves,

And those he overreached must spit
their hate

On one who, utterly beneath con-
tempt,

Could yet deceive their topping wits.
You heard

Bare truth; and at my bidding you
come here

To speed me on my enterprise, as
once

Your lavish wishes sped me, my own
friend?

Fest. What is your purpose,
Aureole?

Par. Oh, for purpose,
There is no lack of precedents in a
case

Like mine; at least, if not precisely
mine,

The case of men cast off by those they
sought

To benefit . . .

Fest. They really cast you off?
I only heard a vague tale of some
priest,

Tured by your skill, who wrangled at
your claim,

Knowing his life's worth best; and
how the judge

The matter was referred to, saw no
cause

To interfere, nor you to hide your
full

Contempt of him; nor he, again, to
smother

His wrath thereat, which raised so
fierce a flame

That Basil soon was made no place
for you.

Par. The affair of Liechtenfels?
the shallowest cause,

The last and silliest outrage—mere
pretence!

I knew it, I foretold it from the
first,

How soon the stupid wonder you
mistook

For genuine loyalty—a cheering pro-
mise

Of better things to come—would pall
and pass;

And every word comes true. Saul is
among

The prophets! Just so long as I was
pleased

To play off the mere marvels of my
art—

Fantastic gambols leading to no
end—

I got huge praise; but one can ne'er
keep down

Our foolish nature's weakness: there
they flocked,

Poor devils, jostling, swearing, and
perspiring,

Till the walls rang again; and all for
me!

I had a kindness for them, which was
right;

But then I stopped not till I tacked
to that

A trust in them and a respect—a sort
Of sympathy for them: I must needs
begin

To teach them, not amaze them; "to
impart

"The spirit which should instigate
the search—

"Of truth:" just what you bade me!
I spoke out.

Forthwith a mighty squadron, in dis-
gust,

Filed off—"the sifted chaff of the
sack," I said,

Redoubling my endeavours to secure
The rest; when lo! one man had
stayed thus long

Only to ascertain if I supported
This tenet of his, or that; another
loved

To hear impartially before he judged,
And having heard, now judged; this
bland disciple

Passed for my dupe, but all along, it
 seems,
 Spied error where his neighbours
 marvelled most :
 That fiery doctor who had hailed me
 friend,
 Did it because my bye-paths, once
 proved wrong
 And beacons properly, would com-
 mend again
 The good old ways our sires jogged
 safely o'er,
 Though not their squeamish sons ; the
 other worthy
 Discovered divers verses of St. John,
 Which, read successively, refreshed
 the soul,
 But, muttered backwards, cured the
 gout, the stone,
 The cholic, and what not :—*quid*
multa? The end
 Was a clear class-room, with a quiet
 leer
 From grave folk, and a sour reproach-
 ful glance
 From those in chief, who, cap in
 hand, installed
 The new professor scarce a year be-
 fore ;
 And a vast flourish about patient
 merit
 Obscured awhile by flashy tricks, but
 sure
 Sooner or later to emerge in splen-
 dour—
 Of which the example was some luck-
 less wight
 Whom my arrival had discomfited,
 But now, it seems, the general voice
 recalled
 To fill my chair, and so efface the
 stain
 Basil had long incurred. I sought no
 better—
 Nought but a quiet dismissal from my
 post ;
 While from my heart I wished them
 better suited,
 And better served. Good night to
 Basil, then !
 But fast as I proposed to rid the
 tribe

Of my obnoxious back, I could not
 spare them
 The pleasure of a parting kick.
Fest. You smile :
 Despise them as they merit !
Par. If I smile,
 'Tis with as very contempt as ever
 turned
 Flesh into stone : this courteous re-
 compense !
 This grateful . . . Festus, were your
 nature fit
 To be defiled, your eyes the eyes to
 ache
 At gangrened blotches, eating poison-
 ous blains,
 The ulcered barked scurf of leprosy
 Which finds—a man, and leaves—a
 hideous thing
 That cannot but be mended by hell
 fire,
 —I say that, could you see as I could
 show,
 I would lay bare to you these human
 hearts
 Which God cursed long ago, and
 devils make since
 Their pet nest and their never-tiring
 home.
 O, sages have discovered we are
 born
 For various ends—to love, to know :
 has ever
 One stumbled, in his search, on any
 signs
 Of a nature in him formed to hate ?
 To hate ?
 If that be our true object which
 evokes
 Our powers in fullest strength, be
 sure 'tis hate !
Fest. But I have yet to learn your
 purpose, Aureole !
Par. What purpose were the fittest
 now for me ?
 Decide ! To sink beneath such pon-
 derous shame—
 To shrink up like a crushed snail—
 undergo
 In silence and desist from further
 toil,
 And so subside into a monument

Of one their censure blasted ; or to
bow

Cheerfully as submissively—to lower
My old pretensions even as Basil dic-
tates—

To drop into the rank her wits assign
me,

And live as they prescribe and make
that use

Of my poor knowledge which their
rules allow—

Proud to be patted now and then, and
careful

To practise the true posture for re-
ceiving

The amplest benefit from their hoofs'
appliance,

When they shall condescend to tutor
me.

Then one may feel resentment like a
flame,

Prompting to deck false systems in
Truth's garb,

And tangle and entwine mankind
with error,

And give them darkness for a dower,
and falsehood

For a possession : or one may mope
away

Into a shade through thinking ; or
else drowse

Into a dreamless sleep, and so die
off :

But I, but I—now Festus shall divine !
Am merely setting out in life once
more,

Embracing my old aims ! What
thinks he now ?

Fest. Your aims ? the aims ?—to
know ? and where is found

The early trust . . .

Par. Nay, not so fast ; I say,
The aims—not the old means. You
know what made me

A laughing-stock ; I was a fool ; you
know

The men and the how : hardly those
means again !

N't but they had their beauty— who
should know

Their passing beauty, if not I ? But
still

They were dreams, so let them vanish :
yet in beauty,

If that may be. Stay—thus they pass
in song !

(*He sings.*)

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and
stripes

Of labdanum, and aloe-balls
Smeared with dull nard an Indian
wipes

From out her hair : (such
balsam falls

Down sea-side mountain pedes-
tals,

From summits where tired winds
are fain,

Spent with the vast and howling
main,

To treasure half their island gain.)

And strew faint sweetness from
some old

Egyptian's fine worm-eaten
shroud,

Which breaks to dust when once
unrolled ;

And shred dim perfume, like a
cloud

From chamber long to quiet
vowed,

With moth and dropping arras
hung,

Mouldering the lute and books
among

Of queen, long dead, who lived
there young.

Mine, every word !—and on such
pile shall die

My lovely fancies, with fair perished
things,

Themselves fair and forgotten ; yes,
forgotten,

Or why abjure them ? So I made
this rhyme

That fitting dignity might be pre-
served :

No little proud was I ; though the
list of drugs

Smacks of my old vocation, and the
verse

Halts like the best of Luther's psalms !

Fest. But, Aureole.
Talk not thus wildly and madly. I
am here —
Did you know all, indeed! I have
travelled far
To learn your wishes. Be yourself
again!
For in this mood I recognize you less
Than in the horrible despondency
I witnessed last. You may account
this, joy;
But rather let me gaze on that despair
Than hear these incoherent words,
and see
This flushed cheek and intensely-
sparkling eye'
Par. Why, man, I was light-
hearted in my prime,
I am light-hearted now; what would
you have?
Aprile was a poet, I make songs —
'Tis the very augury of success I
want!
Why should I not be joyous now as
then?
Fest. Joyous! and how? and what
remains for joy?
You have declared the ends (which I
am sick
Of naming) are impracticable.
Par. Aye,
Pursued as I pursued them—the arch-
fool!
Listen: my plan will please you not,
'tis like;
But you are little versed in the world's
ways.
This is my plan—(first drinking its
good luck)—
I will accept all helps; all I despised
So rashly at the outset, equally
With early impulses, late years have
quenched:
I have tried each way singly—now
for both!
All helps—no one sort shall exclude
the rest.
I seek to KNOW and to ENJOY at
once,
Not one without the other as before.
Suppose my labour should seem God's
own cause

Once more, as first I dreamed, it
shall not balk me
Of the meanest, earthliest, sensualect
delight
That may be snatched; for every joy
is gain,
And why spurn gain, however small?
My soul
Can die then, nor be taunted "what
was gained?"
Nor, on the other hand, if pleasure
meets me
As though I had not spurned her
hitherto,
Shall she o'ercloud my spirit's rap-
communion
With the tumultuous past, the teem-
ing future,
Glorious with visions of a full success
Fest. Success!
Par. And wherefore not
Why not prefer
Results obtained in my best state
being,
To those derived alone from season
dark
As the thoughts they bred? When
was best—my youth
Unwasted—seemed success not sure
too?
It is the nature of darkness to
obscure.
I am a wanderer: I remember well
One journey, how I feared the track
was missed,
So long the city I desired to reach
Lay hid; when suddenly its spirit
afar
Flashed through the circling clouds
conceive my joy!
Too soon the vapours closed o'er
again,
But I had seen the city. and on
such glance
No darkness could obscure: nor sh-
the present
A few dull hours, a passing shame
two,
Destroy the vivid memories of t
past.
I will fight the battle out!—a lit-
tired,

Perhaps—but still an able combatant.
You look at my grey hair and furrowed
brow?

But I can turn even weakness to
account:

Of many tricks I know, 'tis not the
least

To push the ruins of my frame,
whereon

The fire of vigour trembles scarce
alive,

Into a heap, and send the flame aloft!
What should I do with age? so sick-

ness lends
An aid; it being, I fear, the source
of all

We boast of: mind is nothing but
disease,

And natural health is ignorance.

Fest. I see
But one good symptom in this notable
plan:

I feared your sudden journey had in
view

To wreak immediate vengeance on
your foes;

'Tis not so: I am glad.

Par. And if I pleased
To spit on them, to trample them,
what then?

'Tis sorry warfare truly, but the fools
Provoke it: I had spared their self-
conceit,

But if they must provoke me—cannot
suffer

Forbearance on my part—if I may
keep

No quality in the shade, must needs
put forth

Power to match power, my strength
against their strength,

And teach them their own game with
their own arms—

Why be it so, and let them take their
chance!

I am above them like a God—in vain
To hide the fact—what idle scruples,
then,

Were those that ever bade me soften
it,

Communicate it gently to the world,
Instead of proving my supremacy,

Taking my natural station o'er their
heads,

Then owning all the glory was a
man's,

And in my elevation man's would be!
But live and learn, though life's short;

learning, hard!

Still, one thing I have learned—not
to despair:

And therefore, though the wreck of
my past self,

I fear, dear Pütter, that your lecture-
room

Must wait awhile for its best orna-
ment,

The penitent empiric, who set up
For somebody, but soon was taught
his place—

Now, but too happy to be let con-
fess

His error, snuff the candles, and
illustrate

(Fiat experientia corpore vili)
Your medicine's soundness in his
person. Wait,

Good Pütter!

Fest. He who sneers thus, is
a God!

Par. Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am
very glad

You are not gulled by all this swag-
gering; you

Can see the root of the matter!—how
I strive

To put a good face on the overthrow
I have experienced, and to bury and
hide

My degradation in its length and
breadth;

How the mean motives I would make
you think

Just mingle as is due with nobler
aims,

The appetites I modestly allow
May influence me—as I am mortal
still—

Do goad me, drive me on, and fast
supplant

My youth's desires: you are no stupid
dupe;

You find me out! Yes, I had sent
for you

To palm these childish lies upon you,
Festus!

Laugh—you shall laugh at me!

Fest. The past, then, Aureole,
Proves nothing? Is our interchange
of love

Yet to begin? Have I to swear I
mean

No flattery in this speech or that?

For you,

Whate'er you say, there is no degradation,

These low thoughts are no inmates
of your mind;

Or wherefore this disorder? You are
vexed

As much by the intrusion of base
views,

Familiar to your adversaries, as they
Were troubled should your qualities
alight

Amid their murky souls: not other-
wise,

A stray wolf which the winter forces
down

From our bleak hills, suffices to
affright

A village in the vales—while foresters
Sleep calm though all night long the
famished troops

Snuff round and scratch against their
crazy huts:

These evil thoughts are monsters, and
will flee.

Par. May you be happy, Festus,
my own friend!

Fest. Nay, further; the delights you
fain would think

The superseders of your nobler aims,
Though ordinary and harmless stimu-
lants,

Will ne'er content you . . .

Par. Hush! I once despised them,
But that soon passes: we are high at
first

In our demands, nor will abate a jot
Of toil's strict value; but time passes
o'er,

And humbler spirits accept what we
refuse;

In short, when some such comfort is
doled out

As these delights, we cannot long
retain

The bitter contempt which urges us
at first

To hurl it back, but hug it to our
breast

And thankfully retire. This life of
mine

Must be lived out, and a grave
thoroughly earned:

I am just fit for that and nought
beside.

I told you once, I cannot now Enjoy,
Unless I deem my knowledge gains
through joy;

Nor can I Know, but straight warm
tears reveal

My need of linking also joy to know-
ledge:

So on I drive—enjoying all I can,
And knowing all I can. I speak, of
course,

Confusedly; this will better explain—
feel here!

Quick beating, is it not?—a fire of
the heart

To work off somehow, this as well
as any!

So, Festus sees me fairly launched;
his calm

Compassionate look might have dis-
turbed me once,

But now, far from rejecting, I invite
What bids me press the closer, lay
myself

Open before him, and be soothed
with pity;

And hope, if he command hope; and
believe

As he directs me—satiating myself
With his enduring love: and Festus
quits me

To give place to some credulous
disciple

Who holds that God is wise, but
Paracelsus

Has his peculiar merits. I suck in
That homage, chuckle o'er that ad-
miration,

And then dismiss the fool; for night
is come,

And I betake myself to study again,

Till patient searchings after hidden lore
 Half wring some bright truth from its
 prison ; my frame
 Trembles, my forehead's veins swell
 out, my hair
 Tingles for triumph ! Slow and sure
 the morn
 Shall break on my pent room, and
 dwindling lamp,
 And furnace dead, and scattered
 earths and ores,
 When, with a failing heart and throbbing
 brow,
 I must review my captured truth,
 sum up
 Its value, trace what ends to what
 begins,
 Its present power with its eventual
 bearings,
 Latent affinities, the views it opens,
 And its full length in perfecting my
 scheme ;
 I view it sternly circumscribed, cast
 down
 From the high place my fond hopes
 yielded it,
 Proved worthless—which, in getting,
 yet had cost
 Another wrench to this fast-falling
 frame ;
 Then, quick, the cup to quaff, that
 chases sorrow !
 I lapse back into youth, and take
 again
 Mere hopes of bliss for proofs that
 bliss will be,
 My fluttering pulse, for evidence
 that God
 Means good to me, will make my
 cause his own ;
 See ! I have cast off this remorseless
 care
 Which clogged a spirit born to soar
 so free,
 And my dim chamber has become a
 tent.
 Festus is sitting by me, and his
 Michal . . .
 Why do you start ? I say, she listen-
 ing here,
 (For yonder's Würzburg through the
 orchard-boughs)

Motions as though some ardent words
 should find

No echo in a maiden's quiet soul,
 But her pure bosom heaves, her eyes
 fill fast

With tears, her sweet lips tremble all
 the while !

Ha, ha !

Fest. It seems, then, you expect
 to reap

No unreal joy from this your present
 course,

But rather . . .

Par. Death ! To die ! I
 owe that much

To what, at least, I was. I should
 be sad

To live contented after such a fall—
 To thrive and fatten after such re-
 verse !

The whole plan is a makeshift, but
 will last

My time.

Fest. And you have never mused
 and said,

"I had a noble purpose, and full
 strength

"To compass it ; but I have stopped
 half-way,

"And wrongly give the first fruits of
 my toil

"To objects little worthy of the gift :

"Why linger round them still ? why
 clench my fault ?

"Why seek for consolation in de-
 feat—

"In vain endeavours to derive a
 beauty

"From ugliness ? why seek to make
 the most

"Of what no power can change, nor
 strive instead

"With mighty effort to redeem the
 past,

"And, gathering up the treasures thus
 cast down,

"To hold a steadfast course 'till I
 arrive

"At their fit destination, and my
 own ?"

You have never pondered thus ?

Par. Have I, you ask ?

Often at midnight, when most fancies
 come,
 Would some such airy project visit
 me :
 But ever at the end . . . or will you
 hear
 The same thing in a tale, a parable ?
 It cannot prove more tedious ; listen
 then !
 You and I, wandering over the world
 wide,
 Chance to set foot upon a desert coast :
 Just as we cry, "No human voice
 before
 Broke the inveterate silence of these
 rocks !" —
 Their querulous echo startles us ;
 we turn :
 What ravaged structure still looks o'er
 the sea ?
 Some characters remain, too ! While
 we read,
 The sharp, salt wind, impatient for
 the last
 Of even this record, wistfully comes
 and goes,
 Or sings what we recover, mocking it.
 This is the record ; and my voice, the
 wind's.

(*He sings.*)

Over the sea our galleys went,
 With cleaving prows in order brave,
 To a speeding wind and a bounding
 wave—

A gallant armament :
 Each bark built out of a forest-tree,
 Left leafy and rough as first it
 grew,

And nailed all over the gaping
 sides,

Within and without, with black-
 bull hides,

Seethed in fat and suppld in flame,
 To bear the playful billows' game ;
 So each good ship was rude to see,
 Rude and bare to the outward
 view,

But each upbore a stately tent ;
 Where cedar-pales in scented row
 Kept out the flakes of the dancing
 brine :

And an awning drooped the mast
 below,

In fold on fold of the purple fine,
 That neither noon-tide, nor star-
 shine,

Nor moonlight cold which maketh
 mad,

Might pierce the regal tenement.
 When the sun dawned, oh, gay and
 glad

We set the sail and plied the oar ;
 But when the night-wind blew like
 breath,

For joy of one day's voyage more,
 We sang together on the wide
 sea,

Like men at peace on a peaceful
 shore ;

Each sail was loosed to the wind so
 free,

Each helm made sure by the twi-
 light star,

And in a sleep as calm as death,
 We, the strangers from afar,

Lay stretched along, each weary
 crew

In a circle round its wondrous tent,
 Whence gleamed soft light and

curled rich scent,
 And with light and perfume,
 music too :

So the stars wheeled round, and
 the darkness past,

And at morn we started beside the
 mast,

And still each ship was sailing fast !

One morn, the land appeared !— a
 speck

Dim trembling betwixt sea and
 sky—

Avoid it, cried our pilot, check
 The shout, restrain the longing
 eye !

But the heaving sea was black be-
 hind

For many a night and many a day,
 And land, though but a rock, drew
 nigh ;

So we broke the cedar pales away,
 Let the purple awning flap in the
 wind.

And a statue bright was on every deck !
 We shouted, every man of us,
 And steered right into the harbour thus,
 With pomp and pean glorious.

An hundred shapes of lucid stone !
 All day we built a shrine for each—
 A shrine of rock for every one—
 Nor paused we till in the westering sun

We sate together on the beach
 To sing, because our task was done ;
 When lo ! what shouts and merry songs !
 What laughter all the distance stirs !
 What raft comes loaded with its throngs
 Of gentle islanders ?
 "The isles are just at hand," they cried ;
 "Like cloudlets faint at even sleeping,
 "Our temple-gates are opened wide,
 "Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
 "For the lucid shapes you bring"
 —they cried.
 Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
 From our deep dream ; we knew,
 too late,
 How bare the rock, how desolate,
 To which we had flung our precious freight :

Yet we called out—"Depart !
 "Our gifts, once given, must here abide :
 "Our work is done ; we have no heart
 "To mar our work, though vain"
 —we cried.

Fest. In truth ?
Par. Nay, wait : all this
 in tracings faint
 May still be read on that deserted rock,

On rugged stones, strewn here and there, but piled
 In order once ; then follows—mark
 what follows—
 "The sad rhyme of the men who
 proudly clung
 "To their first fault, and withered
 in their pride !"
Fest. Come back, then, Aureole ;
 as you fear God, come !
 This is foul sin ; come back : re-
 nounce the past,
 Forswear the future ; look for joy no
 more,
 But wait death's summons amid holy
 sights,
 And trust me for the event—peace, if
 not joy !
 Return with me to Einsiedeln, dear
 Aureole.

Par. No way, no way : it would
 not turn to good.
 A spotless child sleeps on the flower-
 ing moss—
 'Tis well for him ; but when a sinful
 man,
 Envyng such slumber, may desire to
 put
 His guilt away, shall he return at
 once
 To rest by lying there ? Our sires
 knew well
 (Spite of the grave discoveries of their
 sons)
 The fitting course for such ; dark
 cells, dim lamps,
 A stone floor one may writhe on like
 a worm ;
 No mossy pillow, blue with violets !
Fest. I see no symptom of these
 absolute
 And tyrannous passions. You are
 calmer now.
 This verse-making can purge you
 well enough,
 Without the terrible penance you
 describe.
 You love me still : the lusts you fear,
 will never
 Outrage your friend. To Einsiedeln,
 once more !
 Say but the word !

Par. No, no; those lusts forbid:
They crouch, I know, cowering with
half-shut eye
Beside you; 'tis their nature. Thrust
yourself
Between them and their prey; let
some fool style me
Or king or quack, it matters not, and
try
Your wisdom then, at urging their
retreat!

No, no; learn better and look deeper,
Festus!
If you knew how a devil sneers
within me
While you are talking now of this,
now that,
As though we differed scarcely save
in trifles!

Fest. Do we so differ? True,
change must proceed,
Whether for good or ill; keep from
me, which!
God made you and knows what you
may become

Do not confide all secrets: I was born
To hope, and you . . .

Par. To trust: you
know the fruits!

Fest. Listen: I do believe, what
you call trust

Was self-reliance at the best; for, see!
So long as God would kindly pioneer
A path for you, and screen you from
the world,

Procure you full exemption from
man's lot.

Man's common hopes and fears, on
the mere pretext

Of your engagement in his service—
yield you

A limitless licence, make you God, in
fact,

And turn your slave—you were con-
tent to say

Most courtly praises! What is it, at last.
But selfishness without example?
None

Could trace God's will so plain as you,
while yours

Remained implied in it; but now
you fail,

And we, who prate about that will,
are fools!

In short, God's service is established
here

As He determines fit, and not your
way,

And this you cannot brook! Such
discontent

Is weak. Renounce all creatureship
at once!

Affirm an absolute right to have and
use

Your energies; as though the river
should say—

"We rush to the ocean; what have
we to do

"With feeding streamlets, lingering
in the marshes,

"Sleeping in lazy pools?" Set up
that plea,

That will be bold at least!

Par. Perhaps, perhaps!
Your only serviceable spirits are those

The east produces:—lo, the master
nods,

And they raise terraces, spread garden-
grounds

In one night's space; and, this done,
straight begin

Another century's sleep, to the great
praise

Of him that framed them wise and
beautiful,

Till a lamp's rubbing, or some chance
akin,

Wake them again. I am of different
mould.

I would have soothed my lord, and
slaved for him,

And done him service past my narrow
bond,

And thus I get rewarded for my pains!
Beside, 'tis vain to talk of forward-
ing

God's glory otherwise; this is alone
The sphere of its increase, as far as
men

Increase it; why, then, look beyond
this sphere?

We are his glory; and if we be
glorious,

Is not the thing achieved?

Fest. Shall one like me
 Judge hearts like yours? Though
 years have changed you much,
 And you have left your first love, and
 retain
 Its empty shade to veil your crooked
 ways,
 Yet I still hold that you have
 honoured God;
 And who shall call your course with-
 out reward?
 For, wherefore this repining at de-
 feat,
 Had triumph ne'er inured you to high
 hopes?
 I urge you to forsake the life you
 curse,
 And what success attends me?—
 simply talk
 Of passion, weakness, and remorse;
 in short,
 Anything but the naked truth: you
 choose
 This so-despised career, and rather
 praise
 Than take my happiness, or other
 men's.
 Once more, return!

Par. And soon. Oporinus
 Has pilfered half my secrets by this
 time:
 And we depart by day-break. I am
 weary,
 I know not how; not even the wine-
 cup soothes
 My brain to-night . . .
 Do you not thoroughly despise me,
 Festus?
 No flattery! One like you, needs not
 be told
 We live and breathe deceiving and
 deceived.
 Do you not scorn me from your heart
 of hearts?
 Me and my cant—my petty subter-
 fuges—
 My rhymes, and all this frothy shower
 of words—
 My glozing, self-deceit—my outward
 crust
 Of lies, which wrap, as tetter, mor-
 phew, surfair

Wrap the sound flesh?—so, see you
 flatter not!
 Why, even God flatters! but my
 friend, at least
 Is true. I would depart,
 henceforth
 Against all further insult, hate, and
 wrong
 From puny foes: my one friend
 scorn shall brand me—
 No fear of sinking deeper!

Fest. No, dear Aureole!
 No, no; I came to counsel faithfully:
 There are old rules, made long ere we
 were born,
 By which I judge you. I, so fallible,
 So infinitely low beside your spirit
 Mighty, majestic!—even I can see
 You own some higher law than ours
 which call
 Sin, what is no sin—weakness, what
 is strength;
 But I have only these, such as they
 are,
 To guide me; and I blame you where
 they blame,
 Only so long as blaming promises
 To win peace for your soul; the more,
 that sorrow
 Has fallen on me of late, and they
 have helped me
 So that I faint not under my distress.
 But wherefore should I scruple to
 avow
 In spite of all, as brother judging
 brother,

Your fate to me is most inexplicable:
 And should you perish without recom-
 pense
 And satisfaction yet—too hastily
 I have relied on love: you may have
 sinned,
 But you have loved. As a mere
 human matter—
 As I would have God deal with fragile
 men
 In the end—I say that you will
 triumph yet!

Par. Have you felt sorrow, Festus?
 —'tis because
 You love me. Sorrow, and sweet
 Michal yours!

Well thought on ; never let her know
this last

Dull winding-up of all : these mis-
creants dared

Insult me—me she loved ; so grieve
her not.

Fest. Your ill success can little
grieve her now.

Par. Michal is dead ! pray Christ
we do not craze !

Fest. Aureole, dear Aureole, look
not on me thus !

Fool, fool ! this is the heart grown
sorrow-proof—

I cannot bear those eyes.

Par. Nay, really dead ?

Fest. 'Tis scarce a month . . .

Par. Stone dead !—then you have
laid her

Among the flowers ere this. Now, do
you know,

I can reveal a secret which shall com-
fort

Even you. I have no julep, as men
think,

To cheat the grave ; but a far better
secret.

Know then, you did not ill to trust
your love

To the cold earth : I have thought
much of it :

For I believe we do not wholly
die.

Fest. Aureole . . .

Par. Nay, do not laugh ;
there is a reason

For what I say : I think the soul can
never

Taste death. I am, just now, as you
may see,

Very unfit to put so strange a thought
In an intelligible dress of words ;

But take it as my trust, she is not
dead.

Fest. But not on this account alone ?
you surely,

—Aureole, you have believed this all
along ?

Par. And Michal sleeps among the
roots and dews,

While I am moved at Basil, and full
of schemes

For Nuremberg, and hoping and de-
spairing,

As though it mattered how the farce
plays out,

So it be quickly played. Away,
away !

Have your will, rabble ! while we
fight the prize,

Troop you in safety to the snug back-
seats,

And leave a clear arena for the
brave

About to perish for your sport !—
Behold !

V.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS

SCENE. *A cell in the Hospital of St.
Sebastian, at Salzburg. 1541.*

FESTUS, PARACELSUS.

Fest. No change ! The weary
night is well nigh spent,

The lamp burns low, and through the
casement-bars

Grey morning glimmers feebly—yet
no change !

Another night, and still no sigh has
stirred

That fallen discoloured mouth, no
pang relit

Those fixed eyes, quenched by the
decaying body,

Like torch-flame choked in dust :
while all beside

Was breaking, to the last they held
out bright,

As a strong-hold where life intrenched
itself ;

But they are dead now—very blind
and dead.

He will drowse into death without a
groan !

My Aureole—my forgotten, ruined
Aureole !

The days are gone, are gone ! How
grand thou wert :

And now not one of those who struck
thee down—

Poor, glorious spirit—concerns him
 even to stay
 And satisfy himself his little hand
 Could turn God's image to a livid
 thing.
 Another night, and yet no change !
 'Tis much
 That I should sit by him, and bathe
 his brow,
 And chafe his hands—'tis much ; but
 he will sure
 Know me, and look on me, and speak
 to me
 Once more—but only once ! His
 hollow cheek
 Looked all night long as though a
 creeping laugh
 At his own state were just about to
 break
 From the dying man : my brain swam,
 my throat swelled,
 And yet I could not turn away. In
 truth,
 They told me how, when first brought
 here, he seemed
 Resolved to live—to lose no faculty ;
 Thus striving to keep up his shattered
 strength,
 Until they bore him to this stifling cell :
 When straight his features fell—an
 hour made white
 The flushed face and relaxed the
 quivering limb ;
 Only the eye remained intense awhile,
 As though it recognised the tomb-like
 place ;
 And then he lay as here he lies.
 Ay, here !
 Here is earth's noblest, nobly gar-
 landed—
 Her bravest champion, with his well-
 won meed—
 Her best achievement, her sublime
 amends
 For countless generations, fleeting
 fast
 And followed by no trace ;—the crea-
 ture-god
 She instances when angels would
 dispute
 The title of her brood to rank with
 them—

Angels, this is our angel !—those bright
 forms
 We clothe with purple, crown and call
 to thrones,
 Are human, but not his : those are
 but men
 Whom other men press round and
 kneel before—
 Those palaces are dwelt in by man-
 kind ;
 Higher provision is for him you
 seek
 Amid our pomps and glories : see it
 here !
 Behold earth's paragon ! Now, raise
 thee, clay !
 God ! Thou art Love ! I build my faith
 on that !
 Even as I watch beside Thy tortured
 child,
 Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast
 by him,
 So doth Thy right hand guide us
 through the world
 Wherein we stumble. God ! what
 shall we say ?
 How has he sinned ? How else should
 he have done ?
 Surely he sought Thy praise—Thy
 praise, for all
 He might be busied by the task so
 much
 As to forget awhile its proper end.
 Dost Thou well, Lord ? Thou canst
 not but prefer
 That I should range myself upon his
 side—
 How could he stop at every step to
 set
 Thy glory forth ? Hadst Thou but
 granted him
 Success, Thy honour would have
 crowned success,
 A halo round a star. Or, say he
 erred,—
 Save him, dear God ; it will be like
 Thee : bathe him
 In light and life ! Thou art not made
 like us ;
 We should be wroth in such a case :
 but Thou

Forgivest—so, forgive these passionate thoughts,
Which come unsought, and will not pass away !
I know Thee, who hast kept my path, and made
Light for me in the darkness—tempering sorrow,
So that it reached me like a solemn joy ;
It were too strange that I should doubt Thy love :
But what am I ? Thou madest him, and knowest
How he was fashioned. I could never err
That way : the quiet place beside Thy feet,
Reserved for me, was ever in my thoughts ;
But he—Thou shouldst have favoured him as well !

Ah ! he wakes ! Aureole, I am here—'tis Festus !
I cast away all wishes save one wish—
Let him but know me—only speak to me !
He mutters—louder and louder ; any other
Than I, with brain less laden, could collect
What he pours forth. Dear Aureole, do but look !
Is it talking or singing this he utters fast ?
Misery, that he should fix me with his eye—
Quick talking to some other all the while !
If he would husband this wild vehemence,
Which frustrates its intent !—I heard, I know
I heard my name amid those rapid words :
Oh he will know me yet ! Could I divert
This current—lead it somehow gently back

Into the channels of the past !—His eye,
Brighter than ever ! I must recognise !

Let me speak to him in another's name.

I am Erasmus : I am here to pray
That Paracelsus use his skill for me.
The schools of Paris and of Padua send

These questions for your learning to resolve.

We are your students, noble master : leave

This wretched cell ; what business have you here ?

Our class awaits you ; come to us once more.

(Oh agony ! the utmost I can do
Touches him not ; how else arrest his ear ?)

I am commissioned . . . I shall craze like him—

Better be mute, and see what God shall send.

Par. Stay, stay with me !

Fest. I will ; I am come here
To stay with you—Festus, you loved of old ;

Festus, you know, you must know !

Par. Festus ! Where's Aprile, then ? Has he not chaunted softly

The melodies I heard all night ? I could not

Get to him for a cold hand on my breast,

But I made out his music well enough,

Oh, well enough ! If they have filled him full

With magical music, as they freight a star

With light, and have remitted all his sin,

They will forgive me too, I too shall know !

Fest. Festus, your Festus !

Par. Ask him if Aprile
Knows as he Loves—if I shall Love and Know ?

I try ; but that cold hand, like lead—
so cold !

Fest. My hand, see !

Par. Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile !
We get so near—so very, very near !
'Tis an old tale : Jove strikes the
Titans down

Not when they set about their moun-
tain-piling,

But when another rock would crown
their work !

And Phaeton—doubtless his first
radiant plunge

Astonished mortals ; though the gods
were calm,

And Jove prepared his thunder ; all
old tales !

Fest. And what are these to you ?

Par. Ay, fiends must laugh
So cruelly, so well ; most like I
never

Could tread a single pleasure under
foot,

But they were grinning by my side,
were chuckling

To see me toil, and drop away by
flakes !

Hell-spawn ! I am glad, most glad,
that thus I fail !

You that hate men and all who wish
their good—

Your cunning has o'ershot its aim.
One year,

One month, perhaps, and I had
served your turn !

You should have curbed your spite
awhile. But now,

Who will believe 'twas you that held
me back ?

Listen : there's shame, and hissing,
and contempt,

And none but laughs who names me
—none but spits

Measureless scorn upon me—me alone,
The quack, the cheat, the liar,—all
on me !

And thus your famous plan to sink
mankind

In silence and despair, by teaching
them

One of their race had probed the in-
most truth,

Had done all man could do, yet failed
no less—

Your wise plan proves abortive.
Men despair ?

Ha, ha ! why they are hooting the
empiric,

The ignorant and incapable fool who
rushed

Madly upon a work beyond his wits ;
Nor doubt they but the simplest of
themselves

Could bring the matter to triumphant
issue !

So pick and choose among them all,
Accursed !

Try now, persuade some other to
slave for you,

To ruin body and soul to work your
ends :

No, no ; I am the first and last, I
think !

Fest. Dear friend ; who are ac-
cursed ? who has done . . .

Par. What have I done ? Fiends
dare ask that ? or you,

Brave men ? Oh, you can chime in
boldly, backed

By the others ! What had you to do,
sage peers ?

Here stand my rivals, truly—Arab,
Jew,

Greek, join dead hands against me :
all I ask

Is, that the world enrol my name
with theirs,

And even this poor privilege, it seems,
They range themselves, prepared to
disallow !

Only observe : why fiends may learn
from them !

How they talk calmly of my throes
—my fierce

Aspirings, terrible watchings—each
one claiming

Its price of blood and brain ; how
they dissect

And sneeringly disparage the few
truths

Got at a life's cost ; they too hanging
the while

About my neck, their lies misleading
me,

And their dead names brow-beating
me ! Grey crew,
Yet steeped in fresh malevolence from
hell,
Is there a reason for your hate ? My
truths

Have shaken a little the palm about
each head ?

Just think, Aprile, all these leering
dotards

Were bent on nothing less than being
crowned

As we ! That yellow blear-eyed
wretch in chief,

To whom the rest cringe low with
feigned respect—

Galen, of Pergamos and hell ; nay
speak

The tale, old man ! We met there
face to face :

I said the crown should fall from
thee : once more

We meet as in that ghastly vesti-
bule :

Look to my brow ! Have I redeemed
my pledge ?

Fest. Peace, peace ; ah, see !

Par. Oh, emptiness of fame !

O Persic Zoroaster, lord of stars !

—Who said these old renowns, dead
long ago,

Could make me overlook the living
world

To gaze through gloom at where they
stood, indeed,

But stand no longer ? What a warm
light life

After the shade ! In truth, my deli-
cate witch,

My serpent-queen, you did but well
to hide

The juggles I had else detected. Fire
May well run harmless o'er a breast
like yours !

The cave was not so darkened by the
smoke

But that your white limbs dazzled
me : Oh, white,

And panting as they twinkled, wildly
dancing !

I cared not for your passionate gestures
then,

But now I have forgotten the charm
of charms,

The foolish knowledge which I came
to seek,

While I remember that quaint dance ;
and thus

I am come back, not for those mum-
meries,

But to love you, and to kiss your little
feet,

Soft as an ermine's winter coat !

Fest. A sense

Will struggle through these thronging
words at last,

As in the angry and tumultuous west
A soft star trembles through the drift-
ing clouds.

These are the strivings of a spirit which
hates

So sad a vault should coop it, and
calls up

The past to stand between it and its
fate :

Were he at Einsiedeln—or Michal
here !

Par. Cruel ! I seek her now—I

kneel—I shriek—

I clasp her vesture—but she fades, still
fades ;

And she is gone ; sweet human love
is gone !

'Tis only when they spring to heaven
that angels

Reveal themselves to you ; they sit all
day

Beside you, and lie down at night by
you,

Who care not for their presence—muse
or sleep—

And all at once they leave you and
you know them !

We are so fooled, so cheated ! Why,
even now

I am not too secure against foul
play :

The shadows deepen, and the walls
contract—

No doubt some treachery is going on !
'Tis very dusk. Where are we put,
Aprile ?

Have they left us in the lurch ? This
murky, loathsome

Death-trap—this slaughter-house—is
not the hall
In the golden city! Keep by me,
Aprile!
There is a hand groping amid the
blackness
To catch us. Have the spider-fingers
got you,
Poet? Hold on me for your life; if
once
They pull you!—Hold!
'Tis but a dream—no more.
I have you still!—the sun comes out
again;
Let us be happy—all will yet go well!
Let us confer: is it not like, Aprile,
That spite of trouble, this ordeal
passed,
The value of my labours ascertained,
Just as some stream foams long among
the rocks
But after glideth glassy to the sea,
So, full content shall henceforth be
my lot?
What think you, poet? Louder!
Your clear voice
Vibrates too like a harp-string. Do
you ask
How could I still remain on earth,
should God
Grant me the great approval which I
seek?
I, you, and God can comprehend each
other,
But men would murmur, and with
cause enough;
For when they saw me, stainless of
all sin,
Preserved and sanctified by inward
light,
They would complain that comfort,
shut from them,
I drank thus inespied; that they live
on,
Nor taste the quiet of a constant joy,
For ache, and care, and doubt, and
weariness,
While I am calm; help being vouch-
safed to me,
And hid from them!—'Twere best
consider that!
You reason well, Aprile; but at least

Let me know this, and die! Is this
too much?
I will learn this, if God so please, and
die!
If Thou shalt please, dear God, if
Thou shalt please!
We are so weak, we know our motives
least
In their confused beginning: if at first
I sought . . . But wherefore bare my
heart to Thee?
I know Thy mercy; and already
thoughts
Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,
And intimate I cannot wholly fail,
For love and praise would clasp me
willingly
Could I resolve to seek them: Thou
art good,
And I should be content; yet—yet
first show
I have done wrong in daring! Rather
give
The supernatural consciousness of
strength
That fed my youth—one only hour of
that
With Thee to help—Oh what should
bar me then!
Lost, lost! Thus things are ordered
here! God's creatures,
And yet He takes no pride in us!—
none, none!
Truly there needs another life to
come!
If this be all—(I must tell Festus
that)
And other life await us not—for
one,
I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
A wretched failure. I, for one, pro-
test
Against it—and I hurl it back with
scorn!
Well, onward though alone: small
time remains,
And much to do: I must have fruit,
must reap
Some profit from my toils. I doubt
my body

Will hardly serve me through : while
 I have laboured
 It has decayed ; and now that I
 demand
 Its best assistance, it will crumble
 fast :
 A sad thought—a sad fate ! How
 very full
 Of wormwood 'tis, that just at altar-
 service,
 The rapt hymn rising with the rolling
 smoke,
 When glory dawns, and all is at the
 best —
 The sacred fire may flicker, and grow
 faint,
 And die, for want of a wood-piler's
 help !
 Thus fades the flagging body, and the
 soul
 Is pulled down in the overthrow :
 well, well—
 Let men catch every word—let them
 lose nought
 Of what I say ; something may yet be
 done.

They are ruins ! Trust me who am
 one of you !
 All ruins—glorious once, but lonely
 now.
 It makes my heart sick to behold you
 crouch
 Beside your desolate fane ; the arches
 dim,
 The crumbling columns grand against
 the moon :
 Could I but rear them up once more
 but that
 May never be, so leave them ! Trust
 me, friends,
 Why should you linger here when I
 have built
 A far resplendent temple, all your
 own ?
 Trust me, they are but ruins ! See,
 Aprile,
 Men will not heed ! Yet were I not
 prepared
 With better refuge for them, tongue of
 mine

Should ne'er reveal how blank their
 dwelling is ;
 I would sit down in silence with the
 rest.

Ha, what ? you spit at me, you grin
 and shriek
 Contempt into my ear—my ear which
 drank
 God's accents once ? you curse me ?
 Why men, men,
 I am not formed for it ! Those
 hideous eyes
 Follow me sleeping, waking, praying
 God,
 And will not let me even die : spare,
 spare me,
 Sinning or no, forget that, only spare
 me
 That horrible scorn ; you thought I
 could support it,
 But now you see what silly fragile
 creature
 Cowers thus. I am not good nor bad
 enough,
 Not Christ, nor Cain, yet even Cain
 was saved
 From hate like this : let me but totter
 back,
 Perhaps I shall elude those jeers which
 creep
 Into my very brain, and shut these
 scorched
 Eyelids, and keep those mocking faces
 out.

Listen, Aprile ! I am very calm :
 Be not deceived, there is no passion
 here.
 Where the blood leaps like an im-
 prisoned thing.
 I am calm : I will exterminate the
 race !
 Enough of that : 'tis said and it shall
 be.
 And now be merry—safe and sound
 am I,
 Who broke through their best ranks
 to get at you ;
 And such a havoc, such a rout, Aprile !
Fest. Have you no thought, no
 memory for me,

Aureole? I am so wretched—my
 pure Michal
 Is gone, and you alone are left to me,
 And even you forget me: take my
 hand—
 Lean on me, thus. Do you not know
 me, Aureole?
Par. Festus, my own friend, you
 are come at last?
 As you say, 'tis an awful enterprise—
 But you believe I shall go through
 with it:
 'Tis like you, and I thank you; thank
 him for me,
 Dear Michal! See how bright St.
 Saviour's spire
 Flames in the sunset; all its figures
 quaint
 Gay in the glancing light: you might
 conceive them
 A troop of yellow-vested, white-haired
 Jews,
 Bound for their own land where re-
 demption dawns!
Fest. Not that blest time—not our
 youth's time, dear God!
Par. Ha—stay! true, I forget—all
 is done since!
 And he is come to judge me: how he
 speaks.
 How calm, how well! yes, it is true,
 all true;
 All quackery; all deceit! myself can
 laugh
 The first at it, if you desire: but still
 You know the obstacles which taught
 me tricks
 So foreign to my nature—envy, and
 hate—
 Blind opposition—brutal prejudice—
 Bald ignorance—what wonder if I
 sunk
 To humour men the way they most
 approved?
 My cheats were never palmed on such
 as you,
 Dear Festus! I will kneel if you
 require me,
 Impart the meagre knowledge I
 possess,
 Explain its bounded nature, and avow
 My insufficiency—whate'er you will:

I give the fight up! let there be an
 end,
 A privacy, an obscure nook for me.
 I want to be forgotten even by God!
 But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay
 me,
 When I shall die, within some narrow
 grave,
 Not by itself—for that would be too
 proud—
 But where such graves are thickest;
 let it look
 Nowise distinguished from the hillocks
 round,
 So that the peasant at his brother's
 bed
 May tread upon my own and know it
 not;
 And we shall all be equal at the last.
 Or classed according to life's natural
 ranks,
 Fathers, sons, brothers, friends—not
 rich, nor wise,
 Nor gifted: lay me thus, then say
 "He lived
 "Too much advanced before his
 brother men:
 "They kept him still in front; 'twas
 for their good,
 "But yet a dangerous station. It
 were strange
 "That he should tell God he had
 never ranked
 "With men: so, here at least he is a
 man!"
Fest. That God shall take thee to
 His breast, dear Spirit,
 Unto His breast, be sure! and here on
 earth
 Shall splendour sit upon thy name for
 ever!
 Sun! all the heaven is glad for thee:
 what care
 If lower mountains light their snowy
 phares
 At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge
 not
 The source of day? Men look up to
 the sun:
 For after-ages shall retrack thy beams
 And put aside the crowd of busy
 ones,

And worship thee alone the master-mind,

The thinker, the explorer, the creator !
Then, who should sneer at the convulsive throes

With which thy deeds were born,
would scorn as well

The winding sheet of subterranean fire

Which, pent and writhing, sends no less at last

Huge islands up amid the simmering sea !

Behold thy might in me ! thou hast infused

Thy soul in mine ; and I am grand as thou,

Seeing I comprehend thee—I so simple,

Thou so august ! I recognise thee first ;

I saw thee rise, I watched thee early and late,

And though no glance reveal thou dost accept

My homage—thus no less I proffer it,
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest !

Par. Festus !

Fest. I am for noble Aureole, God !

I am upon his side, come weal or woe !

His portion shall be mine ! He has done well !

I would have sinned, had I been strong enough,

As he has sinned ! Reward him or I waive

Reward ! If Thou canst find no place for him,

He shall be king elsewhere, and I will be

His slave for ever ! There are two of us !

Par. Dear Festus !

Fest. Here, dear Aureole ! ever by you !

Par. Nay, speak on, or I dream again. Speak on !

Some story, any thing—only your voice.

I shall dream else. Speak on ! ay, leaning so !

Fest. Softly the Mayne River glideth

Close by where my love abideth ;
Sleep's no softer : it proceeds

On through lawns, on through meads,

On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,

Though the niggard pasture's edge
Bears not on its shaven ledge

Aught but weeds and waving grasses

To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch

Of primroses, too faint to catch
A weary bee . . .

Par. More, more ; say on !

Fest. The river pushes
Its gentle way through strangling

rushes,
Where the glossy king-fisher

Flutters when noon-heats are near,
Glad the shelving banks to shun,

Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pal

throat

Burrows, and the speckled stoat,
Where the quick sand-pipers flit

In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown

as they.

Nought disturbs the river's way,
Save some lazy stork that springs,

Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill

Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

Par. My heart ! they loose my heart, those simple words ;

Its darkness passes, which none else could touch ;

Like some dark snake that force may not expel,
Which glideth out to music sweet and low.

What were you doing when your voice broke through

A chaos of ugly images ? You, indeed !

Are you alone here ?

Fest. All alone : you know me
This cell ?

Par. An unexceptional vault—

Good brick and stone the bats kept
out, the rats

Kept in—a snug nook : how should I
mistake it ?

Fest. But wherefore am I here ?

Par. Ah ! well remembered :

Why, for a purpose—for a purpose,
Festus !

Tis like me : here I trifle while time
fleets,

And this occasion, lost, will ne'er
return !

You are here to be instructed. I will
tell

God's message ; but I have so much
to say,

I fear to leave half out : all is con-
fused

No doubt ; but doubtless you will
learn in time.

He would not else have brought you
here : no doubt

I shall see clearer soon.

Fest. Tell me but this—
You are not in despair ?

Par. I ? and for what ?

Fest. Alas, alas ! he knows not, as
I feared !

Par. What is it you would ask me
with that earnest,

Dear, searching face ?

Fest. How feel you, Aureole ?

Par. Well !

Well : 'tis a strange thing. I am
dying, Festus,

And now that fast the storm of life
subsides,

I first perceive how great the whirl
has been :

I was calm then, who am so dizzy
now—

Calm in the thick of the tempest, but
no less

A partner of its motion, and mixed up
With its career. The hurricane is

spent,

And the good boat speeds through the
brightening weather :

But is it earth or sea that heaves
below ?

For the gulf rolls like a meadow,
overstrewn

With ravaged boughs and remnants
of the shore ;

And now some islet, loosened from
the land,

Swims past with all its trees, sailing
to ocean ;

And now the air is full of up-torn
canes,

Light strippings from the fan-trees,
tamarisks

Unrooted, with their birds still cling-
ing to them,

All high in the wind. Even so my
varied life

Drifts by me. I am young, old,
happy, sad,

Hoping, desponding, acting, taking
rest,

And all at once : that is, those past
conditions

Float back at once on me. If I select
Some special epoch from the crowd.

'tis but

To will, and straight the rest dissolve
away,

And only that particular state is pre-
sent,

With all its long-forgotten circum-
stance,

Distinct and vivid as at first—myself
A careless looker-on, and nothing

more !

Indifferent and amused, but nothing
more !

And this is death : I understand it
all.

New being waits me : new percep-
tions must

Be born in me before I plunge therein :

Which last is Death's affair ; and
while I speak,

Minute by minute he is filling me
With power ; and while my foot is on
the threshold

Of boundless life—the doors unopened
yet,

All preparations not complete with-
in—

I turn new knowledge upon old
events,

And the effect is . . . But I must not
tell ;

It is not lawful. Your own turn will come

One day. Wait, Festus! You will die like me!

Fest. 'Tis of that past life that I burn to hear!

Par. You wonder it engages me just now?

In truth, I wonder too. What's life to me?

Where'er I look is fire, where'er I listen

Music, and where I tend bliss evermore.

Yet how can I refrain? 'Tis a refined Delight to view those chances,—one last view.

I am so near the perils I escape, That I must play with them and turn them over,

To feel how fully they are past and gone.

Still it is like some further cause exists For this peculiar mood—some hidden purpose;

Did I not tell you something of it, Festus?

I had it fast, but it has somehow slipt Away from me; it will return anon.

Fest. (Indeed his cheek seems young again, his voice

Complete with its old tones: that little laugh

Concluding every phrase, with up-turned eye,

As though one stooped above his head, to whom

He looked for confirmation and applause,—

Where was it gone so long, being kept so well?

Then, the fore-finger pointing as he speaks,

Like one who traces in an open book The matter he declares; 'tis many a year

Since I remarked it last: and this in him.

But now a ghastly wreck!)

And can it be,
Dear Aureole, you have then found out at last

That worldly things are utter vanity?

That man is made for weakness, and should wait

In patient ignorance till God appoint . . .

Par. Ha, the purpose; the true purpose: that is it!

How could I fail to apprehend! You here,

I thus! But no more trifling; I see all,

I know all; my last mission shall be done

If strength suffice. No trifling! Stay; this posture

Hardly befits one thus about to speak: I will arise.

Fest. Nay, Aureole, are you wild? You cannot leave your couch.

Par. No help; no help; Not even your hand. So! there, I stand once more!

Speak from a couch? I never lectured thus.

My gown—the scarlet, lined with fur; now put

The chain about my neck; my signet-ring

Is still upon my hand, I think—even so;

Last, my good sword; ha, trusty Azoth, leapest

Beneath thy master's grasp for the last time?

This couch shall be my throne: I bid these walls

Be consecrate; this wretched cell become

A shrine; for here God speaks to men through me!

Now, Festus, I am ready to begin.

Fest. I am dumb with wonder.

Par. Listen, therefore, Festus! There will be time enough, but none to spare.

I must content myself with telling only

The most important points. You doubtless feel

That I am happy, Festus; very happy.

Fest. 'Tis no delusion which uplifts him thus!

Then you are pardoned, Aureole, all
your sin?

Par. Ay, pardoned! yet why pardoned?

Fest. 'Tis God's praise
That man is bound to seek, and
you . . .

Par. Have lived!
We have to live alone to set forth well
God's praise. 'Tis true, I sinned
much, as I thought,

And in effect need mercy, for I strove
To do that very thing; but, do your
best

Or worst, praise rises, and will rise
for ever.

Pardon from Him, because of praise
denied—

Who calls me to Himself to exalt
Himself?

He might laugh as I laugh!

Fest. Then all comes
To the same thing. 'Tis fruitless for
mankind

To fret themselves with what concerns
them not;

They are no use that way: they
should lie down

Content as God has made them, nor
go mad

In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

Par. No, no; mistake me not;
let me not work

More harm than I have done! This
is my case:

If I go joyous back to God, yet bring
No offering, if I render up my soul

Without the fruits it was ordained to
bear,

If I appear the better to love God
For sin, as one who has no claim

on Him. —

Be not deceived: it may be surely
thus

With me, while higher prizes still
await

The mortal persevering to the end.

For I too have been something,
though too soon

I left the instincts of that happy time!
Fest. What happy time? For God's
sake, for man's sake.

What time was happy? All I hope
to know

That answer will decide. What
happy time?

Par. When, but the time I vowed
my help to man?

Fest. Great God, Thy judgments
are inscrutable!

Par. Yes, it was in me; I was
born for it—

I, Paracelsus: it was mine by right.
Doubtless a searching and impetuous
soul

Might learn from its own motions
that some task

Like this awaited it about the world;
Might seek somewhere in this blank
life of ours

For fit delights to stay its longings
vast;

And, grappling Nature, so prevail
on her

To fill the creature full she dared to
frame

Hungry for joy; and, bravely tyrannous,

Grow in demand, still craving more
and more,

And make each joy conceded prove
a pledge

Of other joy to follow — bating
nought

Of its desires, still seizing fresh pre-
tence

To turn the knowledge and the
rapture wrung

As an extreme, last boon, from
Destiny,

Into occasion for new covetings,
New strifes, new triumphs:—doubt-
less a strong soul

Alone, unaided might attain to this,
So glorious is our nature, so august

Man's inborn uninstructed impulses.
His naked spirit so majestic!

But this was born in me; I was
made so;

Thus much time saved: the feverish
appetites,

The tumult of unproved desire, the
unaimed

Uncertain yearnings, aspirations blind,

Distrust, mistake, and all that ends
 in tears
 Were saved me; thus I entered on
 my course!
 You may be sure I was not all exempt
 From human trouble; just so much
 of doubt
 As bade me plant a surer foot upon
 The sun-road—kept my eye unruined
 mid
 The fierce and flashing splendour—
 set my heart
 Trembling so much as warned me
 I stood there
 On sufferance—not to idly gaze, but
 cast
 Light on a darkling race; save for
 that doubt,
 I stood at first where all aspire at last
 To stand: the secret of the world
 was mine.
 I knew, I felt, (perception unex-
 pressed,
 Uncomprehended by our narrow
 thought,
 But somehow felt and known in
 every shift
 And change in the spirit,—nay, in
 every pore
 Of the body, even,)—what God is,
 what we are,
 What life is—how God tastes an
 infinite joy
 In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
 From whom all being emanates, all
 power
 Proceeds; in whom is life for ever-
 more,
 Yet whom existence in its lowest form
 Includes; where dwells enjoyment
 there is He!
 With still a flying point of bliss
 remote,
 A happiness in store afar, a sphere
 Of distant glory in full view; thus
 climbs
 Pleasure its heights for ever and for
 ever!
 The centre fire heaves underneath the
 earth,
 And the earth changes like a human
 face;

The molten ore bursts up among the
 rocks,
 Winds into the stone's heart, out-
 branches bright
 In hidden mines, spots barren river-
 beds,
 Crumbles into fine sand where sun-
 beams bask—
 God joys therein! The wroth sea's
 waves are edged
 With foam, white as the bitten lip of
 Hate,
 When, in the solitary waste, strange
 groups
 Of young volcanoes come up, cyclops-
 like,
 Staring together with their eyes on
 flame;—
 God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth
 pride!
 Then all is still: earth is a wintry
 clod;
 But spring-wind, like a dancing
 psaltress, passes
 Over its breast to waken it; rare
 verdure
 Buds tenderly upon rough banks,
 between
 The withered tree-roots and the
 cracks of frost,
 Like a smile striving with a wrinkled
 face;
 The grass grows bright, the boughs
 are swoln with blooms.
 Like chrysalids impatient for the
 air;
 The shining dorrs are busy; beetles
 run
 Along the furrows, ants make their
 ado;
 Above, birds fly in merry flocks—
 the lark
 Soars up and up, shivering for very
 joy;
 Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-
 gulls
 Flit where the strand is purple with
 its tribe
 Of nested limpets; savage creatures
 seek
 Their loves in wood and plain; and
 God renews

His ancient rapture ! Thus He dwells
 in all,
 From life's minute beginnings, up
 at last
 To man—the consummation of this
 scheme
 Of being, the completion of this sphere
 Of life : whose attributes had here
 and there
 Been scattered o'er the visible world
 before,
 Asking to be combined—dim frag-
 ments meant
 To be united in some wondrous
 whole—
 Imperfect qualities throughout crea-
 tion,
 Suggesting some one creature yet to
 make—
 Some point where all those scattered
 rays should meet
 Convergent in the faculties of man.
 Power ; neither put forth blindly, nor
 controlled
 Calmly by perfect knowledge ; to be
 used
 At risk, inspired or checked by hope
 and fear :
 Knowledge ; not intuition, but the
 slow
 Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
 Strengthened by love : love ; not
 serenely pure,
 But strong from weakness, like a
 chance-sown plant
 Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts
 forth changed buds,
 And softer stains, unknown in happier
 climes ;
 Love which endures, and doubts, and
 is oppressed,
 And cherished, suffering much, and
 much sustained,
 A blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,
 A half-enlightened, often-chequered
 trust :—
 Hints and previsions of which faculties,
 Are strewn confusedly everywhere
 about
 The inferior natures ; and all lead up
 higher,
 All shape out dimly the superior race,

The heir of hopes too fair to turn out
 false,
 And Man appears at last : so far the
 seal
 Is put on life ; one stage of being
 complete,
 One scheme wound up ; and from the
 grand result
 A supplementary reflux of light,
 Illustrates all the inferior grades, ex-
 plains
 Each back step in the circle. Not
 alone
 For their possessor dawn those
 qualities,
 But the new glory mixes with the
 heaven
 And earth : Man, once descried, im-
 prints for ever
 His presence on all lifeless things ;
 the winds
 Are henceforth voices, in a wail or
 shout,
 A querulous mutter, or a quick gay
 laugh—
 Never a senseless gust now man is
 born !
 The herded pines commune, and have
 deep thoughts,
 A secret they assemble to discuss,
 When the sun drops behind their
 trunks which glare
 Like grates of hell ; the peerless cup
 afloat
 Of the lake-lily is an urn, some
 nymph
 Swims bearing high above her head :
 no bird
 Whistles unseen, but through the gaps
 above
 That let light in upon the gloomy
 woods,
 A shape peeps from the breezy forest-
 top,
 Arch with small puckered mouth and
 mocking eye :
 The morn has enterprise,—deep quiet
 droops
 With evening ; triumph takes the sun-
 set hour,
 Voluptuous transport ripens with the
 corn

Beneath a warm moon like a happy
 face :
 —And this to fill us with regard for
 man,
 With apprehension of his passing
 worth,
 Desire to work his proper nature
 out,
 And ascertain his rank and final place ;
 For these things tend still upward—
 progress is
 The law of life—man's self is not yet
 Man !
 Nor shall I deem his object served,
 his end
 Attained, his genuine strength put
 fairly forth,
 While only here and there a star
 dispels
 The darkness, here and there a tower-
 ing mind
 O'erlooks its prostrate fellows : when
 the host
 Is out at once to the despair of night,
 When all mankind alike is perfected,
 Equal in full-blown powers—then,
 not till then,
 I say, begins man's general infancy !
 For wherefore make account of feverish
 starts
 Of restless members of a dormant
 whole
 Impatient nerves which quiver while
 the body
 Slumbers as in a grave ? Oh, long ago
 The brow was twitched, the tremulous
 lids stir,
 The peaceful mouth disturbed ; half-
 uttered speech
 Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth
 were set,
 The breath drawn sharp, the strong
 right-hand clenched stronger,
 As it would pluck a lion by the jaw ;
 The glorious creature laughed out
 even in sleep !
 But when full roused, each giant-
 limb awake,
 Each sinew strung, the great heart
 pulsing fast,
 He shall start up, and stand on his
 own earth.

And so begin his long triumphant
 march,
 And date his being thence,—thus
 wholly roused,
 What he achieves shall be set down
 to him !
 When all the race is perfected alike
 As Man, that is : all tended to man-
 kind,
 And, man produced, all has its end
 thus far ;
 But in completed man begins anew
 A tendency to God. Prognostics told
 Man's near approach ; so in man's
 self arise
 August anticipations, symbols, types
 Of a dim splendour ever on before,
 In that eternal circle run by life :
 For men begin to pass their nature's
 bound,
 And find new hopes and cares which
 fast supplant
 Their proper joys and griefs ; and
 outgrow all
 The narrow creeds of right and wrong,
 which fade
 Before the unmeasured thirst for good ;
 while peace
 Rises within them ever more and
 more.
 Such men are even now upon the
 earth,
 Serene amid the half-formed creatures
 round,
 Who should be saved by them and
 joined with them.
 Such was my task, and I was born
 to it—
 Free, as I said but now, from much
 that chains
 Spirits, high-dowered, but limited and
 vexed
 By a divided and delusive aim,
 A shadow mocking a reality
 Whose truth avails not wholly to dis-
 perse
 The flitting mimic called up by it-
 self,
 And so remains perplexed and nigh
 put out
 By its fantastic fellow's wavering
 gleam.

I, from the first, was never cheated so ;
 I never fashioned out a fancied good
 Distinct from man's ; a service to be
 done,
 A glory to be ministered unto,
 With powers put forth at man's ex-
 pense, withdrawn
 From labouring in his behalf ; a
 strength
 Denied that might avail him ! I cared
 not
 Lest his success ran counter to success
 Elsewhere : for God is glorified in
 man,
 And to man's glory, vowed I soul and
 limb.
 Yet, constituted thus, and thus en-
 dowed,
 I failed : I gazed on power till I grew
 blind—
 On power ; I could not take my eyes
 from that—
 That only, I thought, should be pre-
 served, increased
 At any risk, displayed, struck out at
 once—
 The sign, and note, and character of
 man.
 I saw no use in the past : only a scene
 Of degradation, imbecility—
 The record of disgraces best forgotten,
 A sullen page in human chronicles
 Fit to erase : I saw no cause why man
 Should not be all-sufficient even now ;
 Or why his annals should be forced
 to tell
 That once the tide of light, about to
 break
 Upon the world, was sealed within
 its spring ;
 I would have had one day, one
 moment's space,
 Change man's condition, push each
 slumbering claim
 To mastery o'er the elemental world
 At once to full maturity, then roll
 Oblivion o'er the tools, and hide from
 man
 What night had ushered morn. Not
 so, dear child
 Of after-days, wilt thou reject the
 Past,
 Big with deep warnings of the proper
 tenure
 By which thou hast the earth : the
 Present for thee
 Shall have distinct and trembling
 beauty, seen
 Beside that Past's own shade, whence,
 in relief,
 Its brightness shall stand out : nor on
 thee yet
 Shall burst the Future, as successive
 zones
 Of several wonder open on some spirit
 Flying secure and glad from heaven
 to heaven ;
 But thou shalt painfully attain to joy,
 While hope, and fear, and love, shall
 keep thee man !
 All this was hid from me : as one by
 one
 My dreams grew dim, my wide aims
 circumscribed,
 As actual good within my reach de-
 creased,
 While obstacles sprung up this way
 and that,
 To keep me from effecting half the
 sum,
 Small as it proved ; as objects, mean
 within
 The primal aggregate, seemed, even
 the least,
 Itself a match for my concentrated
 strength—
 What wonder if I saw no way to
 shun
 Despair ? The power I sought for
 man, seemed God's !
 In this conjuncture, as I prayed to die,
 A strange adventure made me know,
 One Sin
 Had spotted my career from its up-
 rise ;
 I saw Aprile—my Aprile there !
 And as the poor melodious wretch
 disburthened
 His heart, and moaned his weakness
 in my ear,
 I learned my own deep error ; love's
 undoing
 Taught me the worth of love in man's
 estate,

And what proportion love should hold
 with power
 In his right constitution ; love pre-
 ceding
 Power, and with much power, always
 much more love ;
 Love still too straitened in its present
 means,
 And earnest for new power to set it
 free.
 I learned this, and supposed the whole
 was learned :
 And thus, when men received with
 stupid wonder
 My first revealings, would have wor-
 shipped me,
 And I despised and loathed their
 proffered praise—
 When, with awakened eyes, they took
 revenge
 For past credulity in casting shame
 On my real knowledge, and I hated
 them—
 It was not strange I saw no good in
 man,
 To overbalance all the wear and waste
 Of faculties, displayed in vain, but
 born
 To prosper in some better sphere :
 and why ?
 In my own heart love had not been
 made wise
 To trace love's faint beg'nings in
 mankind,
 To know even hate is but a mask of
 love's,
 To see a good in evil, and a hope
 In ill-success ; to sympathize, be proud
 Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings,
 dim
 Struggles for truth, their poorest
 fallacies,
 Their prejudice, and fears, and cares,
 and doubts ;
 Which all touch upon nobleness,
 despite
 Their error, all tend upwardly though
 weak,
 Like plants in mines which never saw
 the sun,

But dream of him, and guess where
 he may be,
 And do their best to climb and get to
 him.
 All this I knew not, and I failed.
 Let men
 Regard me, and the poet dead long
 ago
 Who once loved rashly ; and shape
 forth a third,
 And better tempered spirit, warned
 by both :
 As from the over-radiant star too
 mad
 To drink the light-springs, beamless
 thence itself—
 And the dark orb which borders the
 abyss,
 Ingulfed in icy night,—might have
 its course
 A temperate and equidistant world.
 Meanwhile, I have done well, though
 not all well.
 As yet men cannot do without con-
 tempt—
 'Tis for their good, and therefore fit
 awhile
 That they reject the weak, and scorn
 the false,
 Rather than praise the strong and
 true, in me.
 But after, they will know me ! If I
 stoop
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
 It is but for a time ; I press God's
 lamp
 Close to my breast—its splendour,
 soon or late,
 Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge
 one day !
 You understand me ? I have said
 enough ?
Fest. Now die, dear Aureole !
Par. Festus, let my hand—
 This hand, lie in your own—my own
 true friend !
 Aprile ! Hand in hand with you,
 Aprile !

Fest. And this was Paracelsus !

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STRAFFORD
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

DEDICATED
IN ALL AFFECTIONATE ADMIRATION
TO
WILLIAM C. MACREADY, ESQ.
BY
HIS MOST GRATEFUL AND DEVOTED FRIEND
R. B.

April 23, 1837.

PREFACE

I HAD for some time been engaged in a Poem of a very different nature, when induced to make the present attempt ; and am not without apprehension that my eagerness to freshen a jaded mind by diverting it to the healthy natures of a grand epoch, may have operated unfavourably on the represented play, which is one of Action in Character, rather than Character in Action. To remedy this, in some degree, considerable curtailment will be necessary, and, in a few instances, the supplying details not required, I suppose, by the mere reader. While a trifling success would much gratify, failure will not wholly discourage me from another effort : experience is to come, and earnest endeavour may yet remove many disadvantages.

The portraits are, I think, faithful ; and I am exceedingly fortunate in being able, in proof of this, to refer to the subtle and eloquent exposition of the characters of Eliot and Strafford, in the *Lives of Eminent British Statesmen*, now in the course of publication in Lardner's *Cyclopædia*, by a writer whom I am proud to call my friend ; and whose biographies of Hampden, Pym, and Vane, will, I am sure, fitly illustrate the present year—the Second Centenary of the Trial concerning Ship-Money. My Carlisle, however, is purely imaginary : I at first sketched her singular likeness roughly in, as suggested by Matthew and the memoir-writers—but it was too artificial, and the substituted outline is exclusively from Voiture and Waller.

The Italian boat-song in the last scene is from Redi's *Bacco*, long since naturalized in the joyous and delicate version of Leigh Hunt.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CHARLES THE FIRST.

Earl of HOLLAND.

Lord SAVILE.

Sir HENRY VANE.

WENTWORTH, Viscount WENTWORTH, Earl of STRAFFORD

JOHN PYM.

JOHN HAMPDEN.

The younger VANE.

DENZIL HOLLIS.

BENJAMIN RUDYARD.

NATHANIEL FIENNES.

Earl of LOUDON.

MAXWELL, *Usher of the Black Rod.*

BALFOUR, *Constable of the Tower.*

A Puritan.

Queen HENRIETTA.

LUCY PERCY, Countess of CARLISLE.

*Presbyterians, Scots Commissioners, Adherents of Strafford, Secretaries,
Officers of the Court, &c. Two of Strafford's Children.*

STRAFFORD

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A House near Whitehall.*

HAMPDEN, HOLLIS, *the younger VANE, RUDYARD, FIENNES, and many of the Presbyterian Party: LOUDON and other Scots Commissioners: some seated, some standing beside a table strewn over with papers, &c.*

Vane. I say, if he be here . . .

Rud. And he is here !

Hol. For England's sake let every man be still

Nor speak of him, so much as say his name,

Till Pym rejoin us ! Rudyard—Vane—remember

One rash conclusion may decide our course

And with it England's fate—think—England's fate !

Hampden, for England's sake they should be still !

Vane. You say so, Hollis ? well, I must be still !

It is indeed too bitter that one man—Any one man . . .

Rud. You are his brother, Hollis !

Hamp. Shame on you, Rudyard ! time to tell him that,

When he forgets the Mother of us all.

Rud. Do I forget her ? . . .

Hamp. —You talk idle hate Against her foe : is that so strange a thing ?

Is hating Wentworth all the help she needs ?

A Puritan. The Philistine strode, cursing as he went :

But David—five smooth pebbles from the brook

Within his scrip . . .

Rud. —Be you as still as David !

Fien. Here's Rudyard not ashamed to wag a tongue

Stiff with ten years' disuse of Parliaments ;

Why, when the last sate, Wentworth sate with us !

Rud. Let's hope for news of them now he returns :

—But I'll abide Pym's coming.

Vane. Now by Heaven They may be cool that can, silent that can,

Some have a gift that way : Wentworth is here—

Here—and the King's safe closeted with him

Ere this ! and when I think on all that's past

Since that man left us—how his single arm

Roll'd back the good of England, roll'd it back

And set the woeful Past up in its place . . .

A Puritan. Exalting Dagon where the Ark should be !

Vane. . . . How that man has made firm the fickle King

—Hampden, I will speak out !—in aught he feared

To venture on before ; taught Tyranny

Her dismal trade, the use of all her tools,

To ply the scourge yet screw the gag so close

That strangled agony bleeds mute to death :

—How he turns Ireland to a private stage
For training infant villainies, new ways
Of wringing treasure out of tears and gore,
Unheard oppressions nourished in the dark
To try how much Man's nature can endure

—If he dies under it, what harm? if not . . .

Fien. Why, one more trick is added to the rest

Worth a King's knowing—

Rud. —And what Ireland bears England may learn to bear.

Vane. . . . How all this while That man has set himself to one dear task,

The bringing Charles to relish more and more

Power . . .

Rud. Power without law . . .

Fien. Power and blood too . . .

Vane. . . . Can I be still?

Hamp. For that you should be still.

Vane. Oh, Hampden, then and now! The year he left us

The People by its Parliament could wrest

The Bill of Rights from the reluctant King:

And now,—he'll find in an obscure small room

A stealthy gathering of great-hearted men

That take up England's cause: England is—here!

Hamp. And who despairs of England?

Rud. That do I
If Wentworth is to rule her. I am sick

To think her wretched masters, Hamilton,

The muckworm Cottington, the maniac Laud.

May yet be longed for back again. I say

I do despair.

Vane. And, Rudyard, I'll say this—

And, (*turning to the rest*) all true men say after me! not loud—

But solemnly, and as you'd say a prayer:

This Charles, who treads our England under foot,

Has just so much—it may be fear or craft—

As bids him pause at each fresh outrage; friends,

He needs some sterner hand to grasp his own,

Some voice to ask, "Why shrink?—am I not by?"

—A man that England loved for serving her,

Found in his heart to say, "I know where best

The iron heel shall bruise her, for she leans

Upon me when you trample." Witness, you!

But inasmuch as life is hard to take From England . . .

Many Voices. Go on, Vane! 'Tis well said, Vane!

Vane. . . . Who has not so forgotten Runnymede . . .

Voices. 'Tis well and bravely spoken, Vane! Go on!

Vane. . . . There are some little signs of late she knows

The ground no place for her! no place for her!

When the King beckons—and beside him stands

The same bad man once more, with the same smile,

And the same savage gesture! Now let England

Make proof of us.

Voices. Strike him—the Renegade—

Haman—Abithophel—

Hamp. (To the Scots.) Gentlemen of the North.

It was not thus the night your claims were urged,

And we pronounced the League and Covenant

Of Scotland to be England's cause as well!

Vane, there, sate motionless the whole night through.

Vane. Hampden . . .

Fien. Stay Vane!

Lou. Be patient, gallant Vane!

Vane. Mind how you counsel patience, Loudon! you

Have still a Parliament, and a brave League

To back it; you are free in Scotland still—

While we are brothers (as these hands are knit

So let our hearts be!)—hope's for England yet!

But know you why this Wentworth comes? to quench

This faintest hope? that he brings war with him?

Know you this Wentworth? What he dares?

Lou. Dear Vane,

We know—'tis nothing new . . .

Vane. And what's new, then, In calling for his life? Why Pym himself . . .

You must have heard—ere Wentworth left our cause

He would see Pym first; there were many more

Strong on the People's side and friends of his.—

Not that's dead, Rudyard and Hampden here,

But Wentworth cared not for them; only, Pym

He would see—Pym and he were sworn, they say,

To live and die together—so they met

At Greenwich: Wentworth, you are sure, was long,

Specious enough, the devil's argument lost nothing in his lips; he'd have

Pym own

A Patriot could not do a purer thing Than follow in his track; they two combined

Could put down England. Well, Pym heard him out—

One glance—you know Pym's eye—one word was all:

"You leave us, Wentworth: while your head is on

"I'll not leave you."

Hamp. Has Pym left Wentworth, then?

Has England lost him? Will you let him speak,

Or put your crude surmises in his mouth?

Away with this! (*To the rest.*) Will you have Pym or Vane?

Voices. Wait Pym's arrival! Pym shall speak!

Hamp. Meanwhile

Let Loudon read the Parliament's report

From Edinburgh: our last hope, as Vane says,

Is in the stand it makes. Loudon!

Vane. (*As LOUDON is about to read*) —No—no—

Silent I can be: not indifferent!

Hamp. Then each keep silence, praying God a space

That he will not cast England quite away

In this her visitation! (*All assume a posture of reverence.*)

A Puritan. Seven years long The Midianite drove Israel into dens

And caves.

Till God sent forth a mighty man, (*PYM enters.*)

Even Gideon! (*All start up*)

Pym. Wentworth's come: he has not reached

Whitehall: they've hurried up a Council there

To lose no time and find him work enough.

Where's Loudon? Your Scots' Parliament . . .

Lou. Is firm:

We were about to read reports . . .

Pym. The King

Has just dissolved your Parliament.

Lou. and other of the Scots Great God!

An oath-breaker! Stand by us, England, then!

Pym. The King's too sanguine;
doubtless Wentworth's here;
But still some little form might be
kept up.

Hol. Now speak, Vane! Rudyard,
you had much to say!

Hamp. The rumour's false, then...

Pym. Ay, the Court gives out
His own concerns have brought him
back: I know

'Tis Charles recalls him: he's to
supersede

The tribe of Cottingtons and Hamil-
tons

Whose part is played: there's talk
enough, by this,—

Merciful talk, the King thinks: time
is now

To turn the record's last and bloody
leaf

That, chronicling a Nation's great
despair,

Tells they were long rebellious, and
their Lord

Indulgent, till, all kind expedients
tried,

He drew the sword on them, and
reigned in peace.

Laud's laying his religion on the Scots
Was the last gentle entry:—the new
page

Shall run, the King thinks, "Went-
worth thrust it down

At the sword's point."

A Puritan. I'll do your bidding,
Pym,—

England's and your's . . . one blow!

Pym. A glorious thing—
We all say, friends, it is a glorious
thing

To right that England! Heaven
grows dark above,—

Let's snatch one moment ere the
thunder fall

To say how well the English spirit
comes out

Beneath it! all have done their best,
indeed,

From lion Eliot, that grand English-
man,

To the least here: and who, the least
one here,

When She is saved (and her redemp-
tion dawns

Dimly, most dimly, but it dawns—it
dawns)—

Who'd give at any price his hope
away

Of being named along with the Great
Men?

One would not . . . no, one would
not give that up!

Hamp. And one name shall be
dearer than all names:

When children, yet unborn, are taught
that name

After their fathers',—taught one
matchless man . . .

Pym. . . . Saved England?

What if Wentworth's
should be still

That name?

Rud. and others. We have just said
it, Pym! His death

Saves her!

Fien. We said that! There's
no way beside!

A Puritan. I'll do your bidding,
Pym! They struck down Joab

And purged the land.

Vane. No villainous striking-down!

Rud. No—a calm vengeance: let
the whole land rise

And shout for it. No Feltons!

Pym. Rudyard, no.

England rejects all Feltons; most
of all

Since Wentworth . . .

Hampden, say the praise again

That England will award me . . .
But I'll think

You know me, all of you. Then, I
believe,

—Spite of the past,—Wentworth re-
joins you, friends!

Rud. and others. Wentworth!
apostate . . .

Vane. Wentworth, double-dyed
A traitor! Is it Pym, indeed . . .

Pym. . . . Who says

Vane never knew that Wentworth—
loved that Wentworth—

Felt glad to stroll with him, arm
lock'd in arm,

Along the streets to see the People
 pass
 And read in every island-counte-
 nance
 Fresh argument for God against the
 King,—
 Never sate down . . . say, in the
 very house
 Where Eliot's brow grew broad with
 noble thoughts
 (You've joined us, Hampden, Hollis,
 you as well),
 And then left talking over Gracchus'
 death . . .
Vane. . . . To frame, we know it
 Pym, the choicest clause
 In the Petition of Rights: which
 Wentworth framed
 A month before he took at the King's
 hand
 His Northern Presidency, which that
 Bill
 Denounced . . .
Rud. And infamy along with it!
A Puritan. For whose putteth his
 right hand to the plough
 And turneth back . . .
Pym. Never more, never more
 Walked we together! Most alone I
 went;
 I have had friends—all here are fast
 my friends—
 But I shall never quite forget that
 friend!
(After a pause) And yet it could not
 but be real in him!
 You Vane, you Rudyard, have no
 right to trust
 That Wentworth . . . O will no one
 hope with me?
 Vane—think you Wentworth will
 shed English blood
 Like water?
A Puritan. Ireland is Aceldama!
Pym. Will he turn Scotland to a
 hunting-ground
 To please the King, now that he knows
 the King?
 The People or the King? The People,
 Hampden,
 Or the King . . . and that King—
 Charles! Will no one hope?

Hamp. Pym, we do know you:
 you'll not set your heart
 On any baseless thing: but say one
 deed
 Of Wentworth's, since he left us
 . . . *(Shouting without.)*
Vane. Pym, he comes
 And they shout for him!—Went-
 worth!—he's with Charles—
 The King embracing him—now—
 as we speak . . .
 And he, to be his match in courtes-
 ies,
 Taking the whole war's risk upon
 himself!—
 Now—while you tell us here how
 changed he is—
 Do you hear, Pym? The People
 shout for him!
Fien. We'll not go back now!
 Hollis has no brother—
 Vane has no father . . .
Vane. Pym should have no friend!
 Stand you firm, Pym! Eliot's gone,
 Wentworth's lost,
 We have but you, and stand you very
 firm!
 Truth is eternal, come below what
 will,
 But . . . I know not . . . if you
 should fail . . . O God!
 O God!
Pym (apart and in thought). And
 yet if 'tis a dream, no more,
 That Wentworth chose their side, and
 brought the King
 To love it as though Laud had loved
 it first,
 And the Queen after—that he led
 their cause
 Calm to success and kept it spotless
 through,
 So that our very eyes could look
 upon
 The travail of our soul, and close
 content
 That violence, which something mars
 even Right
 That sanctions it, had taken off no
 grace
 From its serene regard. Only a
 dream!

Hamp. Proceed to England's work :
who reads the list ?

A Voice. "Ship-money is refused
or fiercely paid

In every county, save the northern
ones

Where Wentworth's influence" . . .
(*Renewed shouting.*)

Vane (*passionately striking the
table*). I, in England's name

Declare her work, this way, at end !
till now—

Up to this moment—peaceful strife
was well !

We English had free leave to think :
till now,

We had a shadow of a Parliament :
'Twas well : but all is changed : they
threaten us :

They'll try brute-force for law—here
—in our land !

Many Voices. True hearts with
Vane ! The old true hearts with
Vane !

Vane. Till we crush Wentworth
for her, there's no act
Serves England !

Voices. Vane for England !

Pym (*as he passes slowly before
them*). Pym should be

Something to England ! I seek
Wentworth, friends !

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

Enter CARLISLE and WENTWORTH.

Went. And the King ?

Car. Dear Wentworth, lean on
me ; sit then ;

I'll tell you all ; this horrible fatigue
Will kill you.

Went. No ; or — Lucy. just
your arm ;

I'll not sit till I've cleared this up
with him :

After that, rest. The King ?

Car. Confides in you.

Went. Why ? why now ?

—They have kind throats, the
people !

Shout for me . . . they !—poor fellows.

Car. Did they shout ?

—We took all measures to keep off
the crowd—

Did they shout for you ?

Went. Wherefore should they not ?
Does the King take such measures for
himself ?

Beside, there's such a dearth of mal-
contents,

You say ?

Car. I said but few dared
carp at you . . .

Went. At me ? at us, Carlisle
The King and I !

He's surely not disposed to let me
bear

Away the fame from him of these
late deeds

In Ireland ? I am yet his instrumen-
Be it for well or ill ?

He trusts me then

Car. The King, dear Wentworth
purposes, I know

To grant you, in the face of all the
Court . . .

Went. All the Court ! Evermore
the Court about us !

Savile and Holland, Hamilton and
Vane

About us,—then the King will grant
me . . . Lady,

Will the King leave these—leave all
these—and say

"Tell me your whole n. d., Went-
worth !"

Car. But you said
You would be calm.

Went. Lucy, and I am calm
How else shall I do all I come to do

—Broken, as you may see, body and
mind—

How shall I serve the King ? time
wastes meanwhile,

You have not told me half . . . His
footstep ! No.

—But now, before I meet him,—(I
am calm)—

Why does the King distrust me ?

Car. He does not
Distrust you.

Went. Lucy, you can help
me . . . you

Have even seemed to care for me :
help me !

Is it the Queen ?

Car. No, not the Queen—
the party
That poisons the Queen's ear, — Savile
—and Holland . . .

Went. I know — I know — and
Vane, too, he's one too ?

Go on—and he's made Secretary—
Well ?

Or leave them out and go straight
to the charge !

The charge !

Car. Oh, there's no charge—
no precise charge—

Only they sneer, make light of . . .
one may say

Nibble at what you do.

Went. I know : but Lucy,
Go on, dear Lucy—Oh, I need you so !
I reckoned on you from the first !—
Go on !

. . . Was sure could I once see this
gentle girl

When I arrived, she'd throw an hour
away

To help her weary friend. . . .

Car. You thought of me.
Dear Wentworth ?

Went. . . . But go on ! The
People here . . .

Car. They do not think your Irish
Government

Of that surpassing value . . .

Went. The one thing
Of value ! The one service that the
crown

May count on ! All that keeps these
very things

In power, to vex me . . . not that
they do vex me,

Only it might vex some to hear that
service

Decried—the sole support that's left
the King !

Car. So the Archbishop says.

Went. Ah ? well, perhaps
The only hand held up in its de-
fence

May be old Laud's !

These Hollands, then, these Saviles

Nibble ? They nibble?—that's the
very word !

Car. Your profit in the Customs,
Bristol says, . . .

Went. Enough ! 'Tis too unworthy,
—I am not

So patient as I thought !

What's Pym about ?

Car. Pym ?

Went. Pym and the People.

Car. Oh, the Faction !
Extinct — of no account — there'll
never be

Another Parliament.

Went. Tell Savile that !

You may know—(ay, you do—the
creatures here

Never forget !) that in my earliest life
I was not . . . not what I am now !

The King

May take my word on points con-
cerning Pym

Before Lord Savile's, Lucy, or if not,
Girl, they shall ruin their vile selves,
not me,

These Vanes and Hollands—I'll not
be their tool—

Pym would receive me yet !

—But then the King !—

I'll bear it all. The King—where is
he, Girl ?

Car. He is apprised that you are
here : be calm !

Went. And why not meet me now ?
Ere now ? You said

He sent for me . . . he longed for me !

Car. Because . . .

He is now . . . I think a Council's
sitting now

About this Scots affair . . .

Went. A Council sits ?

They have not taken a decided course
Without me in this matter ?

Car. I should say . . .

Went. The War ? They cannot
have agreed to that ?

Not the Scots' War ?—without con-
sulting me—

Me—that am here to show how rash
it is,

How easy to dispense with ?

—Ah, you too

Against me! well,—the King may
find me here.

(*As CARLISLE is going.*)—Forget it,
Lucy: cares make peevish: mine
Weigh me (but 'tis a secret) to my
grave.

Car. For life or death I am your
own, dear friend!

(*Aside.*) I could not tell him . . . sick
too! . . . And the King
Shall love him! Wentworth here,
who can withstand
His look?—And he did really think
of me?

O 'twas well done to spare him all
the pain! (*Exit.*)

Went. Heartless! . . . but all are
heartless here.

Go now,

Forsake the people!

—I did not forsake

The People: they shall know it . . .
when the King

Will trust me!—who trusts all beside
at once

While I . . . have not spoke Vane
and Savile fair,

And am not trusted: have but saved
the Throne:

Have not picked up the Queen's
glove prettily,

And am not trusted!

But he'll see me now:

And Weston's dead—and the Queen's
English now—

More English—oh, one earnest word
will brush

These reptiles from . . . (*footsteps
within.*)

The step I know so well!

'Tis Charles!—But now—to tell
him . . . no—to ask him

What's in me to distrust:—or, best
begin

By proving that this frightful Scots
affair

Is just what I foretold: I'll say, "my
liege" . . .

And I feel sick, now! and the time
is come—

And one false step no way to be re-
paired . . .

You were revenged, Pym, could you
look on me!

(*PYM enters.*)

Went. I little thought of you just
then.

Pym. No? I

Think always of you, Wentworth.

Went. (Aside.) The old voice!

I wait the King, sir.

Pym. True—you look so pale:
A Council sits within; when that
breaks up

He'll see you.

Went. Sir, I thank you.

Pym. Oh, thank Laud!

You know when Laud once gets on
Church affairs

The case is desperate: he'll not be
long

To-day: he only means to prove,
to-day,

We English all are mad to have a
hand

In butchering the Scots for serving
God

After their fathers' fashion: only
that.

Went. Sir, keep your jests for those
who relish them!

(*Aside.*) Does he enjoy their confi-
dence? (*To P.*) 'Tis kind

To tell me what the Council does.

Pym. You grudge

That I should know it had resolved
on war

Before you came? no need—you shall
have all

The credit, trust me.

Went. Have they, Pym . . .
not dared—

They have not dared . . . that is—I
know you not—

Farewell—the times are changed.

Pym. —Since we two met

At Greenwich? Yes—poor patriots
though we be,

You shall see something here, some
slight return

For your exploits in Ireland! Changed
indeed,

Could our friend Eliot look from out
his grave!

Ah, Wentworth, one thing for acquaintance-sake ;

Just to decide a question ; have you, now,

Really felt well since you forsook us ?

Went.

Pym—

You're insolent !

Pym. Oh, you misapprehend !

Don't think I mean the advantage with me :

I was about to say that, for my part, I've never quite held up my head since then,—

Been quite myself since then : for first, you see,

I lost all credit after that event

With those who recollect how sure I was

Wentworth would outdo Eliot on our side.

Went. By Heaven . . .

Pym. Forgive me : Savile, Vane, and Holland

Eschew plain-speaking : 'tis a trick I have.

Went. How, when, where,—Savile, Vane and Holland speak,—

Plainly or otherwise,—would have my scorn,

My perfect scorn, Sir . . .

Pym. . . . Did not my poor thoughts

Claim somewhat ?

Went. Keep your thoughts ! believe the King

Mistrusts me for their speaking, all these Vanes

And Saviles ! make your mind up, all of you,

That I am discontented with the King !

Pym. Why, you may be—I should be, that I know,

Were I like you.

Went.

Like me ?

Pym. I care not much

For titles : our friend Eliot died no Lord,

Hampden's no Lord, and Savile is a Lord :

But you care, since you sold your soul for one.

I can't think, therefore, Charles did well to laugh

When you twice prayed so humbly for an Earldom.

Went. Pym . . .

Pym.

And your letters were the movingest !

Console yourself : I've borne him prayers just now

From Scotland not to be oppress'd by Laud—

And moving in their way : he'll pay, be sure,

As much attention as to those you sent.

Went. False ! a lie, Sir !

. . . Who told you, Pym ?

—But then

The King did very well . . . nay, I was glad

When it was shewn me why ;—I first refused it !

. . . Pym, you were once my friend—don't speak to me !

Pym. Oh, Wentworth, ancient brother of my soul,

That all should come to this !

Went.

Leave me !

Pym.

My friend,

Why should I leave you ?

Went.

To tell Rudyard this, And Hampden this ! . . .

Pym.

Whose faces once were bright

At my approach . . . now sad with doubt and fear,

Because I hope in you—Wentworth—in you

Who never mean to ruin England—you

Who shake, with God's great help, this frightful dream

Away, now, in this Palace, where it crept

Upon you first, and are yourself—your good

And noble self—our Leader—our dear Chief—

Hampden's own friend—

This is the proudest day !

Come, Wentworth ! Do not even see the King !

The rough old room will seem itself again!

We'll both go in together—you've not seen

Hampden so long—come—and there's Vane—I know

You'll love young Vane! This is the proudest day!

(*The KING enters. WENTWORTH lets fall Pym's hand.*)

Cha. Arrived, my Lord?—This gentleman, we know,

Was your old friend:

(*To Pym*) The Scots shall be informed

What we determine for their happiness. (*Exit Pym.*)

You have made haste, my Lord.

Went. Sire . . . I am come. . .

Cha. To aid us with your counsel: this Scots' League

And Covenant spreads too far, and we have proofs

That they intrigue with France: the Faction, too . . .

Went. (*Kneels.*) Sire, trust me! but for this once, trust me, Sire!

Cha. What can you mean?

Went. That you should trust me! now!

Oh—not for my sake! but 'tis sad, so sad

That for distrusting me, you suffer—you

Whom I would die to serve: Sire, do you think

That I would die to serve you?

Cha. But rise, Wentworth!

Went. What shall convince you? What does Savile do

To . . . Ah, one can't tear out one's heart—one's heart—

And show it, how sincere a thing it is!

Cha. Have I not trusted you?

Went. Say aught but that! It is my comfort, mark you: all will be

So different when you trust me . . . as you shall!

It has not been your fault,—I was away,

Maligned—away—and how were you to know?

I am here, now—you mean to trust me, now—

All will go on so well!

Cha. Be sure I will—I've heard that I should trust you: as you came

Even Carlisle was telling me . . .

Went. No,—hear nothing—Be told nothing about me! you're not told

Your right hand serves you, or your children love you!

Cha. You love me . . . only rise!

Went. I can speak now. I have no right to hide the truth.

'Tis I

Can save you; only I. Sire, what is done!

Cha. Since Laud's assured . . . the minutes are within . . .

Loath as I am to spill my subjects' blood . . .

Went. That is, he'll have a war: what's done is done?

Cha. They have intrigued with France; that's clear to Laud.

Went. Has Laud suggested any way to meet

The war's expense?

Cha. He'd not decide on that Until you joined us.

Went. Most considerate! You're certain they intrigue with France, these Scots?

(*Aside.*) The People would be with us!

Cha. Very sure.

Went. (The People for us . . . were the People for us!)

Sire, a great thought comes to reward your trust!

Summon a parliament! in Ireland first,

And then in England.

Cha. Madness! *Went.* (Aside.) That puts off

The war—gives time to learn their grievances—

To talk with Pym—(*To CHARLES.*) I know the faction, as

They style it, . . .

STRAFFORD

213

Cha. . . . Tutors Scotland!

Went. All their plans

Suppose no Parliament: in calling

one
You take them by sur rise. Produce

the proofs
Of Scotland's treason; bid them help

you, then!

Even Pym will not refuse!

Cha. You would begin

With Ireland?

Went. Take no care for that: that's

sure

To prosper.

Cha. You shall rule me: you were

best

Return at once: but take this ere you

go! (*Giving a paper.*)

Now, do I trust you? You're an Earl:

my Friend

Of Friends: yes, Strafford, while . . .

You hear me not!

Went. Say it all o'er again—but

once again—

The first was for the music—once

again!

Cha. Strafford, my brave friend,

there were wild reports—

Vain rumours . . . Henceforth touch-

ing Strafford is

To touch the apple of my sight: why

gaze

So earnestly?

Went. I am grown young again,

And foolish! . . . what was it we

spoke of?

Cha. Ireland,

The Parliament,—

Went. I may go when I will?

--Now?

Cha. Are you tired so soon of me?

Went. My King . . .

But you will not so very much dis-

like

A Parliament? I'd serve you any

way!

Cha. You said just now this was

the only way!

Went. Sire, I will serve you!

Cha. Strafford, spare yourself—

You are so sick, they tell me, . . .

Went.

'Tis my soul

That's well and happy, now!

This Parliament—

We'll summon it, the English one—

I'll care

For every thing: You shall not need

them much!

Cha. If they prove restive . . .

Went. I shall be with you!

Cha. Ere they assemble?

Went. I will come, or else

Deposit this infirm humanity

I the dust! My whole heart stays

with you, my King!

(*As STRAFFORD goes out, the QUEEN*

enters.)

Cha. That man must love me!

Queen. Is it over then?

Why, he looks yellower than ever!

well,

At least we shall not hear eternally

Of his vast services: he's paid at last.

Cha. Not done with: he engages

to surpass

All yet performed in Ireland.

Queen. I had thought

Nothing beyond was ever to be done.

The War, Charles—will he raise sup-

plies enough?

Cha. We've hit on an expedient;

he . . . that is,

I have advised . . . we have decided on

The calling—in Ireland—of a Parlia-

ment,

Queen. Oh, truly! You agree to

that? Is this

The first fruit of his counsel? But I

guessed

As much.

Cha. This is too idle, Henrietta!

I should know best: he will strain

every nerve,

And once a precedent established . . .

Queen. Notice

How sure he is of a long term of

favours!

He'll see the next, and the next after

that;

No end to Parliaments!

Cha. Well, it is done:

He talks it smoothly, doubtless: if,

indeed,

The Commons here . . .

Queen. Here! you will summon them

Here? Would I were in France again to see

A King!

Cha. But, Henrietta . . .

Queen. Oh, the Scots Do well to spurn your rule!

Cha. But, listen, Sweet . . .

Queen. Let Strafford listen—you confide in him!

Cha. I do not, Love—I do not so confide . . .

The Parliament shall never trouble us . . . Nay, hear me! I have schemes

—such schemes—we'll buy

The leaders off: without that, Strafford's counsel

Had ne'er prevailed on me. Perhaps I call it

To have excuse for breaking it—for ever—

And whose will then the blame be?

See you not?

Come, Dearest!—look! the little fairy, now,

That cannot reach my shoulder! Dearest, come! (*Exeunt.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—(As in Act I. Scene I.)

The same Party enters confusedly; among the first, the younger VANE and RUDYARD.

Rud. Twelve subsidies!

Vane. O Rudyard, do not laugh At least!

Rud. True: Strafford called the Parliament— 'Tis he should laugh!

A Puritan (entering). —Out of the serpent's root Comes forth a cockatrice.

Fien. (entering). —A stinging one, If that's the Parliament: twelve subsidies!

A stinging one! but, brother, where's your word

For Strafford's other nest-egg—the Scots' War?

The Puritan. His fruit—be a fiery flying serpent.

Fien. Shall be? It chips the shell, man; peeps abroad:

Twelve subsidies!—

Why, how now, Vane?

Rud. Hush, Fiennes!

Fien. Ah? . . . but he was not more a dupe than I,

Or you, or any here the day that Pym Returned with the good news. Look up, dear Vane!

We all believed that Strafford meant us well

In summoning the Parliament . . .

(*HAMPDEN enters.*)

Vane (starting up).

Now,

Hampden,

Clear me! I would have leave to sleep again!

I'd look the People in the face again! Clear me from having, from the first, hoped, dreamed

Better of Strafford! Fool!

Hamp. You'll grow one day A steadfast light to England, Vane!

Rud. Ay, Fiennes, Strafford revived our Parliaments: before,

War was but talked of; there's an army, now:

Still, we've a Parliament. Poor Ireland bears

Another wrench (she dies the hardest death!)

Why . . . speak of it in Parliament! and, lo,

'Tis spoken!—and console yourselves. *Fien.* The jest!

We clamoured, I suppose, thus long, to win

The privilege of laying on ourselves Asorer burthen than the King dares lay!

Rud. Mark now: we meet at length: complaints pour in

From every county: all the land cries out

On loans and levies, curses ship-
money,
Calls vengeance on the Star-chamber :
we lend
An ear : "ay, lend them all the ears
you have."
Puts in the King ; "my subjects, as
you find,
"Are fretful, and conceive great things
of you :
"Just listen to them, friends : you'll
sanction me
"The measures they most wince at,
make them yours
"Instead of mine, I know : and, to
begin,
"They say my levies pinch them,—
raise me straight
"Twelve subsidies !"
Fien. and others. All England can-
not furnish
Twelve subsidies !
Hol. But Strafford, just
returned
From Ireland . . . what has he to
do with that ?
How could he speak his mind ? He
left before
The Parliament assembled : Rudyard,
friends,
He could not speak his mind ! and
Pym, who knows
Strafford . . .
Rud. Would I were sure we know
ourselves !
What is for good, what, bad—who
friend, who foe !
Hol. Do you count Parliaments no
gain ?
Rud. A gain ?
While the King's creatures over-
balance us ?
There's going on, beside, among
ourselves
A quiet, slow, but most effectual
course
Of buying over, sapping, . . .
A Puritan. . . . Leavening
The lump till all is leaven.
A Voice. Glanville's gone.
Rud. I'll put a case ; had not the
Court declared

That no sum short of just twelve
subsidies
Will be accepted by the King—our
House
Would have consented to that wretched
offer
To let us buy off Ship-money ?
Hol. Most like,
If . . . say six subsidies, will buy
it off.
The House . . .
Rud. . . . Will rant them !
Hampden, do you hear ?
Oh, I congratulate you that the King
Has gained his point at last . . . our
own assent
To that detested tax ! all's over then !
There's no more taking refuge in this
room
And saying, "Let the King do what
he will,
"We, England, are no party to our
shame.—
"Our day will come !" Congratu-
late with me !

(Pym enters.)

Pym. Pym, Strafford called this
Parliament. 'tis like—
But we'll not have our Parliaments
like those
In Ireland, Pym !
Rud. Let him stand forth, that
Strafford !
One doubtful act hides far too many
sins ;
It can be stretched no more—and, to
my mind,
Begins to drop from those it covers.
Other Voices. Pym,
Let him avow himself ! No fitter
time !
We wait thus long for you !
Rud. Perhaps, too long !
Since nothing but the madness of the
Court
In thus unmasking its designs at once
Had saved us from betraying England.
Stay—
This Parliament is Strafford's : let us
vote
Our list of grievances too black by far

To suffer talk of subsidies : or best—
That Ship-money's disposed of long
ago

By England ; any vote that's broad
enough :

And then let Strafford, for the love of
it,

Support his Parliament !

Vane. And vote as well
No war's to be with Scotland ! Hear
you, Pym ?

We'll vote, no War ! No part nor
lot in it

For England !

Many Voices. Vote, no War ! Stop
the new levies !

No Bishop's War ! At once ! When
next we meet !

Pym. Much more when next we
meet !

—Friends, which of you
Since first the course of Strafford was
in doubt

Has fallen the most away in soul from
me ?

Vane. I sate apart, even now,
under God's eye,

Pondering the words that should de-
nounce you, Pym,

In presence of us all, as one at league
With England's enemy !

Pym. You are a good
And gallant spirit, Henry ! Take my
hand

And say you pardon me for all the
pain

Till now ! Strafford is wholly ours.

Many Voices. 'Tis sure ?

Pym. Most sure—for Charles dis-
solves the Parliament

While I speak here ! . . .

(*Great emotion in the assembly.*)

. . . And I must speak,
friends, now !

Strafford is ours ! The King detects
the change,

Casts Strafford off for ever, and re-
sumes

His ancient path : no Parliament for
us—

No Strafford for the King !

Come all of you

To bid the King farewell, predict
success

To his Scots expedition, and re-
ceive

Strafford, our comrade now ! The
next will be

Indeed a Parliament !

Vane. Forgive me, Pym !

Voices. This looks like truth—
Strafford can have, indeed,

No choice !

Pym. Friends, follow me ! he's
with the King :

Come Hampden, and come Rudyard,
and come Vane—

This is no sullen day for England,
Vane !

Strafford shall tell you !

Voices. To Whitehall then !
Come ! (*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

CHARLES seated, STRAFFORD stand-
ing beside a table covered with
maps, etc.

Cha. Strafford . . .

Straf. Is it a dream ? my
papers, here—

Thus—as I left them—all the plans
you found

So happy—(look ! The track you
pressed my hand

For pointing out !)—and in this very
room

Over these very plans, you tell me,
Sire,

With the same face, too,—tell me just
one thing

That ruins them ! How's this ? what
may this mean ?

Sire, who has done this ?

Cha. Strafford, none but I !

You bade me put the rest away—
indeed

You are alone !

Straf. Alone—and like to be !

No fear, when some unworthy
scheme's grown ripe,

Of those who hatched it leaving you
to loose

The mischief on the world! Laud
 hatches war,
 Falls to his prayers, and leaves the rest
 to me—
 And I'm alone!
Cha. At least, you knew as much
 When first you undertook the war.
Straf. My liege.
 Is this the way? I said, since Laud
 would lap
 A little blood, 'twere best to hurry
 o'er
 The loathsome business not to be
 whole months
 At slaughter—one blow--only one—
 then, peace—
 Save for the dreams! I said, to please
 you both
 I'd lead an Irish army to the West,
 While in the South the English . . .
 but you look
 As though you had not told me fifty
 times
 'Twas a brave plan! My army is
 all raised—
 I am prepared to join it . . .
Cha. Hear me, Strafford!
Straf. . . . When, for some little
 thing, my whole design
 Is set aside—(where is the wretched
 paper?)
 I am to lead—(ay, here it is)—to
 lead
 This English army: why? Northum-
 berland,
 That I appointed, chooses to be sick—
 Is frightened: and, meanwhile, who
 answers for
 The Irish Parliament? or Army,
 either?
 Is this my plan? I say, is this my
 plan?
Cha. You are disrespectful, Sir!
Straf. Do not believe—
 My liege, do not believe it! I am
 yours—
 Yours ever—'tis too late to think
 about—
 To the death, yours! Elsewhere,
 this untoward step
 Shall pass for mine—the world shall
 think it mine—

But, here! But, here! I am so
 seldom here!
 Seldom with you, my King! I—soon
 to rush
 Alone—upon a Giant—in the dark!
Cha. My Strafford!
Straf. (*Seats himself at the table;
 examines papers awhile; then,
 breaking off*)
 . . . "Seize the passes of the
 Tyne" . . .
 But don't you see—see all I say is
 true?
 My plan was sure to prosper,—so, no
 cause
 To ask the Parliament for help;
 whereas
 We need them—frightfully . . .
Cha. Need this Parliament?
Straf. —Now, for God's sake,
 mind—not one error more!
 We can afford no error—we draw,
 now,
 Upon our last resource—this Parlia-
 ment
 Must help us!
Cha. I've undone you, Straf-
 ford!
Straf. Nay—
 Nay—don't despond—Sire—'tis not
 come to that!
 I have not hurt you? Sire—what
 have I said
 To hurt you? I'll unsay it! Don't
 despond!
 Sire, do you turn from me?
Cha. My friend of friends!
Straf. (*After a pause*). We'll make
 a shift! I leave me the Parlia-
 ment!
 They help us ne'er so little but I'll
 make
 A vast deal out of it. We'll speak
 them fair:
 They're sitting: that's one great
 thing: that half gives
 Their sanction to us: that's much:
 don't despond!
 Why, let them keep their money, at
 the worst!
 The reputation of the People's help
 Is all we want—we'll make shift yet!

Cha. Dear Strafford !
Straf. But meantime, let the sum
 be ne'er so small
 They offer, we'll accept it : any sum—
 For the look of it : the least grant
 tells the Scots
 The Parliament is ours . . . their
 staunch ally
 Is ours : that told, there's scarce a
 blow to strike !
 What will the grant be ? What does
 Glanville think ?
Cha. Alas . . .
Straf. My liege ?
Cha. Strafford . . .
Straf. But answer me !
 Have they . . . Oh, surely not refused
 us all ?
 All the twelve subsidies ? We never
 looked
 For all of them ! How many do they
 give ?
Cha. You have not heard . . .
Straf. (What has he done ?)—
 Heard what ?
 But speak at once, Sire—this grows
 terrible !
 (*The King continuing silent.*)
 You have dissolved them !—I'll not
 leave this man.
Cha. 'Twas Vane—his ill-judged
 vehemence that . . .
Straf. Vane ?
Cha. He told them, as they were
 about to vote
 The half, that nothing short of all
 the twelve
 Would serve our turn, or be accepted.
Straf. Vane !
 Vane ! and you promised me that very
 Vane . . .
 O God, to have it gone, quite gone
 from me
 The one last hope--I that despair,
my hope—
 That I should reach his heart one
 day, and cure
 All bitterness one day, be proud again
 And young again, care for the sun-
 shine too,
 And never think of Eliot any
 more,—

God, and to toil for this, go far for
 this,
 Get nearer, and still nearer, reach
 this heart
 And find Vane there !
 (*Suddenly taking up a paper, and
 continuing with a forced calm-
 ness.*)
 Northumberland is sick :
 Well then, I take the army : Wilnot
 leads
 The horse, and he with Conway must
 secure
 The passes of the Tyne : Ormond
 supplies
 My place in Ireland. Here, we'll
 try the City :
 If they refuse a loan . . . debase the
 coin
 And seize the bullion ! we've no other
 choice.
 Herbert . . .
 (*Flinging down the paper.* And this
 while I am here ! with you !
 And there are hosts, such hosts like
 Vane ! I go,—
 And, I once gone, they'll close around
 you, Sire,
 When the least pique, pettiest mis-
 trust, is sure
 To ruin me—and you along with me !
 Do you see that ? And you along
 with me !
 --Sire, you'll not ever listen to these
 men.
 And I away, fighting your battle ?
 Sire,
 If they—if She—charge me—no
 matter what—
 You say, "At any time when he
 returns
 "His head is mine." Don't stop me
 there ! You know
 My head is yours . . . only, don't
 stop me there !
Cha. Too shameful, Strafford !
 You advised the war,
 And . . .
Straf. I ! I ! that was never spoken
 with
 Till it was entered on ! That loathe
 the war !

That say it is the maddest, wickedest . . .
 Do you know, Charles, I think, within my heart,
 That you would say I did advise the war;
 And if, thro' your own weakness, falsehood, Charles,
 These Scots, with God to help them, drive me back . . .
 You will not step between the raging People
 And me, to say . . .
 I knew you! from the first
 I knew you! Never was so cold a heart!
 Remember that I said it—that I never
 Believed you for a moment!
 —And, you loved me?
 You thought your perfidy profoundly hid
 Because I could not share your whisperings
 With Vane? With Savile? But your hideous heart—
 I had your heart to see, Charles!
 Oh, to have
 A heart of stone—of smooth, cold, frightful stone!
 Ay, call them! Shall I call for you?
 The Scots
 Goaded to madness? Or the English
 —Pym—
 Shall I call Pym, your subject? Oh, you think
 I'll leave them in the dark about it all?
 They shall not know you? Ha! . . .
 Pym shall not . . .
(Enter Pym, Hampden, Vane, &c.)
(Dropping on his knee.) Thus favoured with your gracious countenance
 What shall a rebel League avail against
 Your servant, utterly and ever yours?
(To the rest) So, Gentlemen, the King's not even left
 The privilege of bidding me farewell
 Who haste to save the People—that you style

Your People—from the mercies of the Scots
 And France their friend?
(To CHARLES) Pym's grave grey eyes are fixed
 Upon you, Sire!
(To the rest) Your pleasure, Gentlemen?
Hamp. The King dissolved us—'tis the King we seek
 And not Lord Strafford.
Straf. . . . Strafford, guilty too
 Of counselling the measure: *(To CHARLES)* (Hush . . . you know . . .
 You have forgotten . . . Sire, I counselled it!)
(Aloud) A heinous matter, truly!
 But the King
 Will yet see cause to thank me for a course
 Which now, perchance . . . (Sire, tell them so!) . . . he blames.
 Well, choose some fitter time to make your charge—
 I shall be with the Scots—you understand?
 Then yelp at me!
 Meanwhile, your Majesty
 Binds me, by this fresh token of your trust . . .
(Under the pretence of an earnest farewell, STRAFFORD conducts CHARLES to the door, in such a manner as to hide his agitation from the rest: VANE and others, gazing at them: as the King disappears, they turn as by one impulse to Pym, who has not changed his original posture of surprise.)
Hamp. Leave we this arrogant strong wicked man!
Vane and others. Dear Pym!
 Come out of this unworthy place
 To our old room again! Come, dearest Pym!
(STRAFFORD just about to follow the King, looks back.)
Pym. (To STRAFFORD) Keep tryst! the old appointment's made anew:
 Forget not we shall meet again!

Straf. Be it so ! His Squires are not the Giant's friends :
 And if an army follows me ? well—well—
Vane. His friends Let us go forth !
 Will entertain your Army ! *Car.* Go forth ?
Pym. I'll not say *Straf.* What matters it ?
 You have misreckoned, Strafford : We shall die gloriously—as the book
 time will . . . says.
 Perish *Car.* To Scotland ? not to Scot-
 Body and spirit ! Fool to feign a land ?
 doubt *Straf.* Am I sick
 Pretend the scrupulous and nice re- Like your good brother, brave North-
 serve umberland ?
 Of one whose prowess is to do the Beside the walls seem falling on me !
 feat ! *Car.* Strafford,
 What share have I in it ? Shall I The wind that saps these walls can
 affect undermine
 To see no dismal sign above your Your camp in Scotland, too ! Whence
 head creeps the wind !
 When God suspends his ruinous Have you no eyes except for Pym ?
 thunder there ? Look here !
 Strafford is doom'd !—Touch him no A breed of silken creatures lurk and
 one of you ! thrive
 (*Exeunt PYM, HAMPDEN, &c.*) In your contempt ; you'll vanquish
Straf. Pym, we shall meet again ! Pym ? Friend, Vane
 Can vanquish you ! And Vane you
 think to fly ?—
 (*Enter CARLISLE.*) Rush on the Scots ! Do nobly !
 You here, girl ? Vane's slight sneer
Car. Hush— Shall test success—adjust the praise
 I know it all—hush, dearest Strafford ! —suggest
Straf. Ah ? The faint result : Vane's sneer shall
 Well. I shall make a sorry soldier, reach you there !
 Lucy ! You do not listen :
 All Knights begin their enterprise, *Straf.* Oh . . . I give that up—
 you know, There's fate in it— I give all here
 Under the best of auspices ; 'tis quite up.
 morn— Care not what Vane does or what
 The Lady girds his sword upon the Holland does
 Youth— Against me ! 'Tis so idle to with-
 (*He's always very young*)—the trum- stand them—
 pets sound — In no case tell me what they do !
 Cups pledge him, and . . . and . . . *Car.* But, Strafford . . .
 the King blesses him— *Straf.* I want a little strife, beside
 You need not turn a page of the —real strife :
 Romance This petty, palace-warfare does me
 To learn the Dreadful Giant's fate ! harm :
 Indeed I shall feel better, fairly out of it.
 We've the fair Lady here ; but she *Car.* Why do you smile ?
 apart,— *Straf.* I got to fear them, girl !
 A poor man, never having handled I could have torn his throat at first,
 lance, that Vane,
 And rather old, weary, and far from As he leered at me on his stealthy way
 sure

STRAFFORD

121

To the Queen's closet, Lucy—but of late
I often found it in my heart to say
"Vane—don't traduce me to her!"
Car. But the King . . .
Straf. The King stood there, 'tis not so long ago,
There, and the whisper, Lucy, "Be my friend
"Of friends!"—My King! I would have . . .
Car. . . . Died for him?
Straf. . . . Sworn him true, Lucy: I will die for him.
Car. (*Aside*) What can he mean? You'd say he loved him still!
(*To STRAFFORD.*) But go not, Strafford! . . . But you must renounce This project on the Scots! Die! wherefore die?
Charles never loved you!
Straf. And he will not, now: He's not of those who care the more for you
That you're unfortunate.
Car. Then wherefore die For such a master?
Straf. You that told me first How good he was—when I must leave true friends
To find a truer friend!—that drew me here
From Ireland,—"I had but to show myself
"And Charles would spurn Vane, Savile, and the rest"—
You, girl, to ask me that?
Car. (*Aside.*) If he have set His heart abidingly on Charles!
(*To STRAFFORD.*) Dear friend, I shall not see you any more!
Straf. Yes, girl— There's one man here that I shall meet!
Car. (*Aside.*) The King!— What way to save him from the King?
My soul . . .
That lent from its own store the charmed disguise
That clothes the King . . . he shall behold my soul!

(*To STRAFFORD.*) Strafford . . . (I shall speak best if you'll not gaze Upon me.) . . . You would perish, too! So sure! . . .
Could you but know what 'tis to bear, my Strafford,
One Image stamped within you, turning blank
The else imperial brilliance of your mind,—
A weakness, but most precious,—like a flaw
I' the diamond which should shape forth some sweet face
Yet to create, and meanwhile treasured there
Lest Nature lose her gracious thought for ever! . . .
Straf. When could it be? . . . no! . . . yet . . . was it the day
We waited in the anteroom, till Holland
Should leave the presence-chamber?
Car. What?
Straf. —That I Described to you my love for Charles?
Car. (*Aside.*) Ah, no—
One must not lure him from a love like that!
Oh, let him love the King and die!
'Tis past . . .
I shall not serve him worse for that one brief
And passionate hope . . . silent for ever now!
(*To STRAFFORD.*) And you are really bound for Scotland, then?
I wish you well: you must be very sure
Of the King's faith, for Pym and all his crew
Will not be idle—setting Vane aside!
Straf. If Pym is busy,—you may write of Pym.
Car. What need when there's your King to take your part?
He may endure Vane's counsel; but for Pym—
Think you he'll suffer Pym to . . .
Straf. Girl, your hair Is glossier than the Queen's!

Car. Is that to ask
A curl of me?
Straf. Scotland—the weary way!
Car. Stay, let me fasten it.
—A rival's, Strafford?
Straf. (*Showing the George.*) He hung it there: twine yours around it, girl!
Car. No—no—another time—I trifle so!
And there's a masque on foot: fare-well! the Court
Is dull: do something to enliven us
In Scotland; we expect it at your hands.
Straf. I shall not fall in Scotland.
Car. Prosper—if
You'll think of me sometimes!
Straf. How think of him
And not of you? of you—the lingering streak
(A golden one) in my good fortune's eve?
Car. Strafford . . .
Well, when the eve
has its last streak
The night has its first star! (*Exit.*)
Straf. That voice of hers . . .
You'd think she had a heart sometimes! His voice
Is soft too.
Only God can save him now.
Be Thou about his bed, about his path! . . .
His path! Where's England's path?
Diverging wide,
And not to join again the track my foot
Must follow—whither? All that forlorn way—
Among the tombs! Far—far—till . . .
What, they do
Then join again, these paths? For, huge in the dusk,
There's—Pym to face!
Why, then I have a Foe
To close with, and a fight to fight at last
That's worth my soul! What—do they beard the King—

And shall the King want Strafford at his need—
My King—at his great need? Am I not here?
... Not in the common blessed market-place
Pressed on by the rough artisans, so proud
To catch a glance from Wentworth!
They'll lie down
Hungry and say "Why, it must end some day"
"Is he not watching for our sake?"
—Not there!
But in Whitehall—the whited sepulchre—
The . . .
(*At the Window, and looking on London.*)
Curse nothing to-night! Only one name
They'll curse in all those streets to night! Whose fault?
Did I make kings—set up, the first, a man
To represent the multitude, receive All love in right of them—supplanting them
Until you love the man and not the King—
The man with the mild voice and mournful eyes
That send me forth . . .
To breast the bloody sea
That sweeps before me—with one star to guide—
Night has its first supreme forsaken star!
(*Exit.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Opposite Westminster Hall.*

Sir HENRY VANE, Lord SAVILE, Lord HOLLAND, and others of the Court.

Vane. The Commons thrust you out?

Savile. And what kept you

From sharing their civility?

Vane. Kept me?
Fresh news from Scotland, sir! worse
than the last
If that may be! all's up with Strafford
there!

Nothing's to bar the mad Scots march-
ing hither

The next fine morning! That de-
tained me, sir!

Well now, before they thrust you out,
go on,

Their speaker . . . did the fellow
Lenthall say

All we set down for him?

Hol. Not a word missed!
Ere he began, we entered, Savile, I
And Bristol, and some more, in hopes
to breed

A wholesome awe in the new Parlia-
ment—

But such a gang of graceless ruffians,
Vane!

They glared at us . . .

Vane. So many?

Savile. Not a bench
Without its complement of burley
knaves—

Your son, there, Vane, among them
—Hampden leant

Upon his shoulder—think of that!

Vane. I'd think
On Lenthall's speech, if I could get
at it . . .

He said, I hope, how grateful they
should be

For this unlooked-for summons from
the King?

Hol. Just as we drilled him . . .

Vane. That the Scots will march
On London?

Hol. All, and made so much
of it,

A dozen subsidies at least seemed
sure

To follow, when . . .

Vane. Well?

Hol. 'Tis a strange thing now!
In a vague memory of a sort of
sound—

A voice—a kind of vast, unnatural
voice—

Pym, Sir, was speaking! Savile
help me out,

What was it all?

Sav. Something about "a
matter" . . .

No . . . "a work for England."

Bristol. "England's great revenge"
He talked of.

Sav. How should I be used to Pym
More than yourselves?

Hol. However that may be,
'Twas something with which we had
nought to do,

For we were "strangers" and 'twas
"England's work"—

(All this while looking us straight in
the face)

In other words, our presence might
be spared:

So, in the twinkling of an eye, before
I settled to my mind what ugly
brute

Was likest Pym just then, they yelled
us out,

Locked the doors after us, and here
are we!

Vane. Old Eliot's method . . .

Sir. Ah, now, Vane, a truce
To Eliot and his times, and the great
Duke,

And how to manage Parliaments!
'Twas you

Advised the Queen to summon this
why Strafford,

To do him justice, would not hear
of it!

Vane. Say, rather, you have done
the best of turns

To Strafford—he's at York—we all
know why!

I would you had not set the Scots on
Strafford

Till he had put down Pym for us, my
lord!

Sav. I? did I alter Strafford's
plans? did I . . .

(Enter a Messenger.)

Mes. The Queen, my lords . . .
she sends me . . . follow me

At once . . . 'tis very urgent . . .
she would have

Your counsel . . . something perilous
and strange

Occasions her command

Sav. We follow, friend !

Now Vane . . . your Parliament will
plague us all !

Vane. No Strafford here beside !

Sav. If you dare hint

I had a hand in his betrayal, Sir . . .

Hol. Nay, find a fitter time for
quarrels—Pym

Will overmatch the best of you ; and,
think,

The Queen !

Vane. Come on, then (*as they go
out.*) . . . understand, I loathe

Strafford as much as any—but he
serves

So well to keep off Pym—to screen
us all !

I would we had reserved him yet
awhile ! (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

The QUEEN and CARLISLE.

Queen. It cannot be !

Car. It is so.

Queen. Why, the House,

Have hardly met !

Car. They met for that.

Queen. No—no—

Meet to impeach Lord Strafford !

'Tis a jest !

Car. A bitter one.

Queen. Consider ! 'Tis the House

We summoned so reluctantly—which
nothing

But the disastrous issue of the war
Persuaded us to summon ; they'll
wreak all

Their spite on us, no doubt ; but the
old way

Is to begin by talk of grievances !

They have their grievances to busy
them !

Car. Pym has begun his speech.

Queen. Where's Vane ? . . .

That is

Pym will impeach Lord Strafford if
he leaves

His Presidency—he's at York, you
know,

Since the Scots beat him—why should
he leave York ?

Car. Because the King sends for
him.

Queen. Ah . . . but if

The King did send for him, he let
him know

We had been forced to call a Parlia-
ment—

A step which Strafford, now I come
to think,

Was vehement against . . .

Car. The policy

Escaped him of first striking Parlia-
ments

To earth, then setting them upon
their feet

And giving them a sword : but this is
idle !

—Did the King send for Strafford ?

He will come.

Queen. And what am I to do ?

Car. What do ? Fail, Madam !

Be ruined for his sake ! what matters
how

So it but stand on record that you
made

An effort—only one ?

Queen. The King's away

At Theobald's.

Car. Send for him at once—he

must

Dissolve the House.

Queen. Wait till Vane finds the

truth

Of the report—then . . .

Car. . . . It will matter little

What the King does. Strafford that
serves you all—

That's fighting for you now !

(*Enter Sir H. VANE.*)

Vane. The Commons, Madam

Are sitting with closed doors—a huge
debate—

No lack of noise—but nothing,
should guess,

Concerning Strafford : Pym has cer-
tainly

Not spoken yet.

Queen. (To CARLISLE.) You hear?
Car. I do not hear

That the King's sent for!

Vane. Savile will be able
To tell you more.

(Enter HOLLAND.)

Queen. The last news, Holland?

Hol. Pym
Is raging like a fiend! The whole
House means

To follow him together to Whitehall
And force the King to give up
Strafford.

Queen. Strafford?

Hol. If they content themselves
with Strafford! Laud

Is talked of, Cottington and Winde-
bank too,

Pym has not left out one of them
. . . I would

You heard Pym raving!

Queen. Vane, find out the King!

Tell the King, Vane, the People
follow Pym

To brave us at Whitehall!

(Enter SAVILE.)

Sav. Not to Whitehall—
'Tis to the Lords they go—they'll
seek redress

On Strafford from his peers—the
legal way,

They call it . . .

Queen. (Wait, Vane!)

Sav. . . . But the adage gives
Long life to threatened men! Straf-
ford can save

Himself so readily: at York, re-
member,

In his own county, what has he to
fear?

The Commons only mean to frighten
him

From leaving York.

Queen. Surely he will not come!
Carlisle, he will not come!

Car. Once more, the King
Has sent for Strafford—He will come.

Vane. Oh, doubtless;
And bring destruction with him;
that's his way.

What but his coming spoilt all Con-
way's plan?

The King must take his counsel,
choose his friends,

Be wholly ruled by him! What's
the result?

The North that was to rise—Ireland
to help—

What came of it? In my poor mind
a fright

Is no prodigious punishment.

Car. A fright?
Pym will fail worse than Strafford if
he thinks

To frighten him. (To the QUEEN.)
You will not save him, then?

Sav. When something like a charge
is made, the King

Will best know how to save him:
and 'tis clear

That, while he suffers nothing by the
matter,

The King will reap advantage: this
in question,

No dinning you with ship-money
complaints!

Queen. (To CARLISLE.) If we dis-
solve them, who will pay the
army?

Protect us from the insolent Scots?

Car. In truth
I know not, Madam: Strafford's fate
concerns

Me little: you desired to learn what
course

Would save him: I obey you.

Vane. Notice, too,
There can't be fairer ground for tak-
ing full

Revenge—(Strafford's revengeful)—
than he'll have

Against this very Pym.

Queen. Why, he shall claim
Vengeance on Pym!

Vane. And Strafford, who is he
To 'scape unscathed amid the acci-
dents

That harass all beside? I, for my part,
Should look for something of discom-
fiture

Had the King trusted me so thor-
oughly

And been so paid for it.

Hol. He'll keep at York :
All will blow over : he'll return no
worse—

I tumbled a little—thankful for a
place

Under as good a man—Oh, we'll dis-
pense

With seeing Strafford for a month or
two !

(Enter STRAFFORD.)

Queen. You here !

Straf. The King sends for me,
Madam.

Queen. Sir . . .
The King . . .

Straf. An urgent matter that im-
ports the King . . .

(*To CARLISLE.*) Why, Lucy, what's
in agitation now

That all this muttering and shrugging,
see,

Begins at me ? They do not speak !

Car. Oh, welcome !
. . . And we are proud of you . . .

all very proud
To have you with us, Strafford . . .

you were brave
At Durham . . . You did well there

. . . Had you not
Been stayed you might have . . . we

said, even now,
Our last, last hope's in you !

Vane (*To CARLISLE.*) The Queen
would speak

A word with you !
Straf. (*To VANE.*) Will one of you
vouchsafe

To signify my presence to the King ?
Sav. An urgent matter ?

Straf. None that touches you,
Lord Savile ! Say it were some

treacherous,
Sly, pitiful intriguing with the Scots—

You would go free, at least ! (*Aside.*)
They half divine

My purpose ! (*To the QUEEN.*)
Madam, shall I see the King ?

The service I would render much
concerns

His welfare.

Queen. But his Majesty, my lord
May not be here, may . . .

Straf. Its importance, then,
Must plead excuse for this withdrawal,

Madam—
And for the grief it gives Lord Savile
here.

Queen. (*Who has been conversing
with VANE and HOLLAND.*) The
King will see you, Sir.

(*To CARLISLE.*) Mark me : Pym's
worst

Is done by now—he has impeached
the Earl,

Or found the Earl too strong for him,
by now ;

Let us not seem instructed ! We
should work

No good to Strafford, but deform
ourselves

With shame in the world's eye !
(*To STRAFFORD.*) His Majesty

Has much to say with you.
Straf. (*Aside.*) Time fleeting, too !

(*To CARLISLE.*) No means of getting
them away, Carlisle ?

What does she whisper ? Does she
know my purpose ?

What does she think of it ? Get them
away !

Queen. (*To CARLISLE.*) He comes
to baffle Pym—he thinks the
danger

Far off—tell him no word of it—a
time

For help will come—we'll not be
wanting, then !

Keep him in play, Carlisle—you,
self-possessed

And calm ! (*To STRAFFORD.*) To
spare your Lordship some delay

I will myself acquaint the King.
(*To CARLISLE.*) Beware !

(*Exeunt QUEEN, VANE, HOLLAND
and SAVILE.*)

Straf. She knows it ?

Car. Tell me, Strafford . . .
Straf. Afterward !

The moment's the great moment of
all time !

She knows my purpose ?

Car. Thoroughly—just now

She bade me hide it from you.

Straf. Quick, dear girl . . .
The whole grand scheme?

Car. (Aside.) Ah, he would
learn if they
Connive at Pym's procedure! Could
they but

Have once apprised the King! But
there's no time

For falsehood, now. (*To STRAF-*
FORD.) Strafford, the whole is
known.

Straf. Known and approved?

Car. Hardly discountenanced.

Straf. And the King—say the King
consents as well!

Car. The King's not yet informed,
but will not dare

To interpose.

Straf. What need to wait him,
then?

He'll sanction it! I stayed, girl, tell
him, long!

It vexed me to the soul—this waiting
here—

You know him—there's no counting
on the King!

Tell him I waited long!

Car. (Aside.) What can he mea. ?
Rejoice at the King's hollowness?

Straf. I knew
They would be glad of it,—all over
once,

I knew they would be glad . . . but
he'd contrive,

The Queen and he, to mar, by help-
ing it,

An angel's making!

Car. (Aside.) Is he mad? (*To*
STRAFFORD.) Dear Strafford,

You were not wont to look so happy.

Straf. Girl,
I tried obedience thoroughly: I took
The King's wild plan . . . of course,

ere I could reach
My army—Conway ruined it: I drew

The wrecks together, raised all heaven
and earth,

And would have fought the Scots—
the King at once

Made truce with them: then, Lucy,
then, dear girl,

God put it in my mind to love, serve, die
For Charles—but never to obey him
more!

While he endured their insolence at
Rippon

I fell on them at Durham.

. . . But you'll tell
The King I waited? All the ante-
room

Is filled with my adherents.

Car. Strafford—Strafford

What daring act is this you hint?

Straf. No—no!

'Tis here—not daring if you knew!—
all here!

(*Drawing papers from his breast.*)

Full proof—see—ample proof—does
the Queen know

I have such damning proof? Bedford
and Essex,

Broke, Warwick, Savile (did you
notice Savile?

The simper that I spoilt?) Say,
Mandeville—

Sold to the Scots, body and soul, by
Pym!

Car. Great heaven!

Straf. From Savile and his lords,
to Pym—

I crush them, girl—Pym shall not
ward the blow

Nor Savile crawl aside from it! The
Court

And the Cabal—I crush them!

Car. And you go . . .
Strafford,—and now you go? . . .

Straf. About no work
In the back-ground, I promise you!

I go

Straight to the House of Lords to
claim these men.

Mainwaring!

Car. Stay—stay, Strafford!

Straf. She'll return—
The Queen—some little project of her
own—

No time to lose—the King takes
fright perhaps—

Car. Pym's strong, remember!

Straf. Very strong—as fits
The Faction's Head . . . with no

offence to Hampden,

Vane, Rudyard, and my loving Hollis
—one
And all they lodge within the Tower
to-night
In just equality. Bryan! Mainwar-
ing!

(Many of his Adherents enter.)

The Peers debate just now (a lucky
chance)
On the Scots war—my visit's oppor-
tune:
When all is over, Bryan, you'll proceed
To Ireland: these dispatches, mark
me, Bryan,
Are for the Deputy, and these for
Ormond—
We'll want the Army here—my Army,
raised
At such a cost, that should have done
such good,
And was inactive all the time! no
matter—
We'll find a use for it. Willis . . .
no—you!
You, friend, make haste to York—
bear this, at once . . .
Or,—better stay for form's sake—see
yourself
The news you carry. You remain
with me
To execute the Parliament's command.
Mainwaring—help to seize the lesser
knaves:
Take care there's no escaping at back-
doors!
To not have one escape—mind me—
not one!
I seem revengeful, Lucy? Did you
know
What these men dare!
Car. It is so much they dare!
Straf. I proved that long ago;
my turn is now!
Keep sharp watch, Goring, on the
citizens;
Observe who harbours any of the
brood
That scramble off: be sure they smart
for it!
Our coffers are but lean.
And you, girl, too,

Shall have your task—deliver this to
Laud—
Laud will not be the slowest in my
praise!
"Thorough" he'll say!
—Foolish, to be so glad!
This sort of life is vivid, after all!
'Tis worth while, Lucy, having foes
like mine
For the dear bliss of crushing them!
To-day
Is worth the living for!
Car. That reddening brow!
You seem . . .
Straf. Well—do I not? I
would be well
I could not but be well on such a
day!
And, this day ended, 'tis of slight
import
How long the ravaged frame subjects
the soul
In Strafford!
Car. Noble Strafford!
Straf. No farewell!
I'll see you, girl, to-morrow—the first
thing!
—If she should come to stay me!
Car. Go—'tis nothing—
Only my heart that swells—it has
been thus
Ere now—go, Strafford!
Straf. To-night, then, let it be!
I must see him . . . I'll see you
after him . . .
I'll tell you how Pym looked. Follow
me, friends!
You, gentlemen, shall see a sight this
hour
To talk of all your lives. Close after
me!
"My friend of friends!"
(Exeunt STRAFFORD, &c.)
Car. The King—ever the King!
No thought of one beside, whose little
word
Unveils the King to him—one word
from me—
Which yet I do not breathe!
Ah, have I spared
Strafford a pang, and shall I seek
reward

Beyond that memory? Surely too,
 some way
 He is the better for my love . . .
 No, no
 He would not look so joyous—I'll
 believe
 His very eye would never sparkle thus,
 Had I not prayed for him this long,
 long while !
 (Exit.)

SCENE III.—*The Ante-chamber of the House of Lords.*

Many of the Presbyterian Party. The Adherents of STRAFFORD, &c.

A Group of Presbyterians.—1. I tell you he struck Maxwell—Maxwell sought To stay the Earl: he struck him and passed on.

2. Fear as you may, keep a good countenance Before these ruffians !

3. Strafford here the first— With the great army at his back !

4. No doubt ! I would Pym had made haste . . . that's Bryan, hush— The fellow pointing.

STRAFFORD'S *Followers.*—1. Mark these worthies, now !

2. A goodly gathering ! "Where the carcass is There shall the eagles" . . . what's the rest ?

3. For eagles Say crows.

A Presbyterian. Stand back, Sirs !

One of STRAFFORD'S Followers.

Are we in Geneva ?

A Presbyterian. No—nor in Ireland, we have leave to breathe.

One of STRAFFORD'S Followers.

Really ? Behold how grand a thing it is

To serve "King Pym" ! There's some one at Whitehall

That lives obscure, but Pym lives . . .

The Presbyterian. Nearer !

A Follower of STRAFFORD. Higher

We look to see him ! [*To his Companions.*] I'm to have St. John In charge ; was he among the knaves just now

That followed Pym within there ?

Another. The gaunt man Talking with Rudyard. Did the Earl expect

Pym at his heels so fast ? I like it not.

(Enter MAXWELL.)

Another. Why, man, they rush into the net ! Here's Maxwell—

Ha, Maxwell ?—How the brethren flock around

The fellow ! Do you feel the Earl's hand yet

Upon your shoulder, Maxwell ?

Max. Gentlemen, Stand back ! a great thing passes here.

A Follower of STRAFFORD. [*To another.*] The Earl

Is at his work ! [*To M.*] Say, Maxwell, what great thing !

Speak out ! [*To a Presbyterian.*] Friends, I've a kindness for you !

Friends, I've seen you with St. John . . . Oh, stockishness !

Wear such a ruff, and never call to mind

St. John's head in a charger ?

What—the plague— Not laugh ?

Another. Say, Maxwell, what it is !

Another. Hush—wait— The jest will be to wait—

First. And who's to bear These quiet hypocrites ? You'd swear they came . . .

Came . . . just as we come !

(*A PURITAN enters hastily and without observing STRAFFORD'S Followers.*)

The Puritan. How goes on the work ?

Has Pym . . .

A Follower of STRAFFORD. The secret's out at last—Aha,

The carrion's scented ! Welcome. crow the first !

Gorge merrily you with the blinking
eye!

"King Pym has fallen!"

The Puritan. Pym?

A Strafford. Pym!

A Presbyterian. Only Pym?

Many of STRAFFORD'S Followers.

No, brother—not Pym only—
Vane as well—

Rudyard as well—Hampden—Saint
John as well—

A Presbyterian. My mind mis-
gives . . . can it be true?

Another. Lost! Lost!

A Strafford. Say we true, Max-
well?

The Puritan. Pride before
destruction,

A haughty spirit goeth before a
fall.

Many of STRAFFORD'S Followers.

Ah now! The very thing! A
word in season!

A golden apple in a silver picture
To greet Pym as he passes!

*(The folding-doors at the back begin
to open, noise and light issuing.)*

Max. Stand back, all!

Many of the Presbyterians. I'll
die with Pym! And I!

STRAFFORD'S Followers. Now for
the text—

He comes! Quick!

The Puritan (With uplifted arms.)

How hath the Oppressor ceased!

The Lord hath broken the staff of
the wicked:

The sceptre of the Rulers—he who
smote

The People in wrath with a continual
stroke—

That ruled the nations in his anger
. . . He

Is persecuted and none hindereth!

*(At the beginning of this speech, the
doors open, and STRAFFORD, in
the greatest disorder, and amid
cries from within of "Void the
House," staggers out. When he
reaches the front of the Stage,
silence.)*

Straf. Impeach me! Pym! I never
struck, I think,

The felon on that calm insulting
mouth

When it proclaimed—Pym's mouth
proclaimed me . . .

God!

Was it a word, only a word that
held

The outrageous blood back on my
heart . . . which beats!

Which beats! Some one word . . .
"Traitor," did he say

Bending that eye, brimful of bitter
fire,

Upon me?

Max. (Advancing.) In the Com-
mons' name, their servant
Demands Lord Strafford's sword.

Straf. What did you say?

Max. The Commons bid me ask
your Lordship's sword.

*Straf. (Suddenly recovering, and
looking round, draws it, and
turns to his followers.)* Let us
go forth—follow me, gentle
men—

Draw your swords too—cut any down
that bar us!

On the King's service! Maxwell,
clear the way!

*(The PRESBYTERIANS, prepare to
dispute his passage.)*

Straf. Ha—true! . . . That is,
you mistake me, utterly—

I will stay—the King himself shall
see me—here—

Here—I will stay, Mainwaring!—
First of all,

(To MAXWELL.) Your tablets, fellow!
(He writes on them.)

(To MAINWARING.) Give that to
the King!

Yes, Maxwell, for the next half-hour,
I will . . .

I will remain your prisoner, I
will!

Nay, you shall take my sword!

(MAXWELL advances to take it.)

No—no—not that!

Their blood, perhaps, may wipe out
all thus far—

All up to that—not that! Why, friend, you see
 When the King lays his head beneath my foot
 I will not pay for that! Go, all of you!
Max. I grieve, my lord, to disobey: none stir.
Straf. This gentle Maxwell!—Do not touch him, Bryan!
(To the PRESBYTERIANS.) Which ever cur of you will carry this
 I'll save him from the fate of all the rest—
 I'll have him made a Peer—I'll . . . none will go?
 None? *(Cries from within of "STRAFFORD.")*
(To his FOLLOWERS.) Slings' J, I've loved you at least—my friend,
 Stab me! I have not time to tell you why . . .
 You, then, dear Bryan! You, Mainwaring, then!
 . . . Ah, that's because I spoke so hastily
 At Allerton—the King had vexed me . . .
(To the PRESBYTERIANS.) You Miscreants—you then—that I'll exterminate!
 —Not even you? If I live over it
 The King is sure to have your heads—you know
 I'm not afraid of that—you understand
 That if I chose to wait—made up my mind
 To live this minute—he would do me right!
 But what if I can't live this minute through?
 If nothing can repay that minute? Pym
 With his pursuing smile—Pym to be there!
(Louder cries of "STRAFFORD.")
 The King! I troubled him—stood in the way
 Of his negotiations—was the one Great obstacle to peace—the Enemy
 Of Scotland—and he sent for me—from York—

My safety guaranteed—having prepared
 A Parliament! I see! And at Whitehall
 The Queen was whispering with Vane . . . I see
 The trap! I curse the King! I wish Pym well!
 Wish all his brave friends well! Say, all along
 Strafford was with them—all along, at heart,
 I hated Charles and wished them well! And say
(Tearing off the George and dashing it down)
 That as I tread this gew-gaw under foot,
 I cast his memory from me! One stroke, now!
(His own adherents disarm him. Renewed cries of "STRAFFORD.")
 I'll not go . . . they shall drag me by the hair!
(Changing suddenly to calm.) England! I see her arm in this!
 I yield.
 Why—'tis the fairest triumph! Why desire
 To cheat them? I would never stoop to that—
 Be mean enough for that! Let all have end!
 Don't repine. Slingsby . . . have they not a right?
 They claim me—hearken—lead me to them, Bryan!
 No—I myself should offer up myself.
 Pray you now . . . Pym awaits me . . . pray you now!
(Putting aside those who attempt to support him, STRAFFORD reaches the doors—they open wide. HAMPDEN, &c., and a crowd discovered; and at the bar, PYM standing apart. As STRAFFORD kneels the scene shuts.)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Whitehall.*

The KING, the QUEEN, HOLLIS, CARLISLE. (VANE, HOLLAND, SAVILE, in the background.)

Car. Answer them, Hollis, for his sake!—One word!

Cha. (To HOLLIS.) You stand, silent and cold, as though I were Deceiving you, my friend, my play-fellow

Of other times! What wonder after all?

Just so I dreamed my People loved me!

Hol. Sire, It is yourself that you deceive, not me! You'll quit me comforted—your mind made up

That since you've talked thus much and grieved thus much, All you can do for Strafford has been done.

Queen. If you kill Strafford . . . come, we grant you leave,

Suppose . . .

Hol. I may withdraw, Sire?

Car. Hear them out!

'Tis the last chance for Strafford! Hear them out!

Hol. "If we kill Strafford"—on the eighteenth day

Of Strafford's trial—*We!*

Cha. Pym, my good Hollis—Pym, I should say!

Hol. Ah, true—Sire, pardon me! You witness our proceedings every day,

But the screened gallery, I might have guessed,

Admits of such a partial glimpse at us—

Pym takes up all the room, shuts out the view!

Still, on my honour, Sire, the rest of the place

Is not unoccupied: the Commons sit—That's England; Ireland sends, and Scotland too,

Their representatives: the Peers that judge

Are easily distinguished; one remarks The People here and there . . . but the close curtain

Must hide so much!

Queen. Acquaint your insolent crew,

This day the curtain shall be dashed aside!

It served a purpose!

Hol. Think! This very day? Ere Strafford rises to defend himself?

Cha. I will defend him, Sir! sanction the past—

This day—it ever was my purpose! Rage

At me, not Strafford! Oh I shall be paid

By Strafford's look!

Car. (To HOLLIS.) Nobly! Oh, will he not

Do nobly?

Hol. Sire, you will do honestly; And, for that look, I too would be a king!

Cha. (After a pause.) Only, to do this now—just when they seek

To make me out a tyrant—one that's deaf

To subjects' prayers,—shall I oppose them now?

It seems their will the Trial should proceed . . .

'Tis palpably their will!

Hol. You'll lose your throne: But it were no bright moment saved for that!

Strafford, your prime support, the sole roof-tree

That props this quaking House of Privilege

(Floods come, winds beat, and see—the treacherous sand!),

Doubtless if the mere putting forth an arm

Could save him, you'd save Strafford!

Cha. And they mean Calmly to consummate this wrong

No hope? This ineffaceable wrong! No pity then?

Hol. No plague in store for perfidy?—Farewell!

You summoned me . . . (*To CARLISLE.*) You, Lady, bade me come

To save the Earl! I came, thank God for it,

To learn how far such perfidy can go!

. . . You dare to talk with me of saving him

Who have just ruined Strafford!

Cha. I?

Hol. See, now!

Eighteen days long he throws, one after one,

Our charges back: a blind moth-eaten law!

—He'll break from us at last! And whom to thank?

The Mouse that gnawed the Lion's net for him

Got a good friend,—but he, the other Mouse,

That looked on while the Lion freed himself—

Fared he so well, does any fable say?

Cha. What can you mean?

Hol. Pym never could have proved

Strafford's design of bringing up the troops

To force this kingdom to obedience: Vane—

Your servant, Vane . . .

Queen. Well, Sir?

Hol. . . . Has proved it.

Cha. Vane?

Hol. This day! Did Vane deliver up or no

Those notes which, furnished by his son to Pym,

Have sealed . . .

Cha. Speak, Vane! As I shall live, I know

Nothing that Vane has done! What treason next?

I wash my hands of it! Vane, speak the truth!

—Ask Vane himself!

Hol. I will not speak to Vane

Who speak to Pym and Hampden every day!

Queen. Speak to Vane's master, then! Why should he wish

For Strafford's death?

Hol. Why? Strafford cannot turn As you sit there—bid you come forth and say

If every hateful act were not set down

In his commission?—Whether you contrived

Or no that all the violence should seem

His work, the gentle ways—your own, as if

He counteracted your kind impulses While . . . but you know what he

could say! And then

Would he produce, mark you, a certain charge

To set your own express commands aside,

If need were, and be blameless! He'd say, then . . .

Cha. Hold!

Hol. . . . Say who bade him break the Parliament,—

Find out some pretext to set up sword-law . . .

Queen. Retire, Sir!

Cha. Vane—once more—what Vane dares do

I know not . . . he is rash . . . a fool . . . I know

Nothing of Vane!

Hol. Well—I believe you; Sire Believe me, in return, that . . .

(*Turning to CARLISLE.*) Gentle Lady,

The few words I would say the stones might hear

Sooner than these . . . I'll say them all to you,

You, with the heart! The question, trust me, takes

Another shape, to-day: 'tis not if Charles

Or England shall succumb,—but which shall pay

The forfeit, Strafford or his Master: Sire,

You loved me once . . . think on my warning now ! (Exit.)

Cha. On you and on your warning both !—Carlisle !

That paper !

Queen. But consider !

Cha. Give it me !

There—signed—will that content you?—Do not speak !

You have betrayed me, Vane !—See—any day

(According to the tenour of that paper)

He bids your brother bring the Army up—

Strafford shall head it and take full revenge !

Seek Strafford ! Let him have it, look, before

He rises to defend himself !

Queen. In truth ?

Clever of Hollis, now, to work a change

Like this ! You were reluctant . . .

Cha. Say, Carlisle, Your brother Percy brings the Army up—

Falls on the Parliament—(I'll think of you,

My Hollis !)—say we plotted long . . . 'tis mine,

The scheme is mine, remember ! Say I cursed

Vane's folly in your hearing ! If that man

Does rise to do us shame, the fault shall lie

With you, Carlisle !

Car. Nay, fear not me ! but still That's a bright moment, Sire, you throw away . . .

Oh, draw the veil and save him !

Queen. Go, Carlisle !

Car. (Aside, and going). I shall see Strafford—speak to him : my heart

Must never beat so, then !

And if I tell The truth ? What's gained by falsehood ? There they stand

Whose trade it is—whose life it is ! How vain

To gild such rottenness ! Strafford shall know,

Thoroughly know them !

The Queen. (As she leaves the KING, &c.) Trust to me !

[To CARLISLE.] Carlisle, You seem inclined, alone of all the Court,

To serve poor Strafford : this bold plan of yours

Merits much praise, and yet . . .

Car. Time presses, Madam.

Queen. Yet . . . may it not be something premature ?

Strafford defends himself to-day—reserves

Some wondrous effort . . . one may well suppose—

He'll say some overwhelming fact, Carlisle !

Car. Aye, Hollis hints as much.

Cha. Why linger then ?

Haste with the scheme—my scheme—I shall be there

To watch his look ! Tell him I watch his look !

Queen. Stay, we'll precede you !

Car. At your pleasure.

Cha. Say . . .

Say . . . Vane is hardly ever at Whitehall !

I shall be there, remember !

Car. Doubt me not !

Cha. On our return, Carlisle, we wait you here !

Car. I'll bring his answer ; Sire, I follow you.

(Exit K., &c.)

Ah . . . but he would be very sad to find

The King so faithless, and I take away

All that he cares to live for : let it go—

'Tis the King's scheme !

My Strafford, I can save . . . Nay, I have saved you—yet am scarce content,

Because my poor name will not cross your mind . . .

Strafford, how much I am unworthy you ! (Exit.)

SCENE II.—*A Passage adjoining Westminster Hall.*

Many groups of Spectators of the Trial (which is visible from the back of the Stage)—Officers of the Court, &c.

1st Spec. More crowd than ever!

. . . Not know Hampden, man?

That's he—by Pym—Pym that is speaking now!

No, truly—if you look so high you'll see

Little enough of either!

2nd Spec. Hush . . . Pym's arm

Points like a prophet's rod!

3rd Spec. Ay—ay—we've heard Some pretty speaking . . . yet the Earl escapes!

4th Spec. I fear it: just a foolish word or two

About his children . . . and they see, forsooth,

Not England's Foe in Strafford—but the Man

Who, sick, half-blind . . .

2nd Spec. What's that Pym's saying now

That makes the curtains flutter . . . look! A hand

Clutches them . . . Ah! The King's hand!

5th Spec. I had thought Pym was not near so tall! What said he, friend?

2nd Spec. "Nor is this way a novel way of blood" . . .

And the Earl turns as if to . . . look! look!

Many Spectators. Heaven—What ails him . . . no—he rallies . . . see—goes on

And Strafford smiles. Strange!

(*Enter a PURITAN.*)

The Puritan. Haselrig!

Many Spectators. Friend? Friend?

The Puritan. Lost—utterly lost . . .

just when we looked for Pym To make a stand against the ill effects

Of the Earl's speech! Is Haselrig without?

Pym's message is to him! (*Exit.*)

3rd Spec. Now, said I true?

Will the Earl leave them yet at fault or no?

1st Spec. Never believe it, man!

These notes of Vane's

Ruin the Earl.

5th Spec. A brave end . . . not a whit

Less firm, less . . . Pym all over!

Then, the Trial

Is closed . . . no . . . Strafford means to speak again!

An Officer. Stand back, there!

5th Spec. Why, the Earl is coming hither!

Before the court breaks up! His brother, look,—

You'd say he deprecated some fierce act

In Strafford's mind just now!

An Officer. Stand back, I say!

2nd Spec. Who's the veiled woman that he talks with?

Many Spectators.

Hush—

The Earl! the Earl!

[*Enter STRAFFORD, SLINGSBY and other Secretaries, HOLLIS, CARLISLE, MAXWELL, BALFOUR, &c. STRAFFORD converses with CARLISLE.*]

Hol. So near the end! Be patient—Return!

Straf. (*To his Secretaries.*) Here—anywhere—or—'tis freshest here . . .

(*To spend one's April here—the blossom-month!*)

Set it down here! [*They arrange a table, papers, &c.*]

What, Pym to quail, to sink Because I glance at him, yet . . .

Well, to end—What's to be answered, Slingsby?

Let us end!

[*To CARLISLE.*] Girl, I refuse his offer; whatsoever

It be! Too late! Tell me no word of him!

[To HOLLIS.] 'Tis something, Hollis,
I assure you that—

To stand, sick as you are, some
eighteen days

Fighting for life and fame against a
pack

Of very curs, that lie thro' thick and
thin.

Eat flesh and bread by wholesale, and
can't say

"Strafford" if it would take my life!
Car. Be kind

This once! Glance at the paper . . .
if you will

But glance at it. . .

Straf. Already at my heels!
Pym's faulting bloodhounds scent the
track again!

Peace, girl! Now, Slingsby!

*(Messengers from Lane and other of
STRAFFORD'S Counsel within the
Hall are coming and going dur-
ing the Scene.)*

Straf. *(Setting himself to write and
dictate).* I shall beat you, Hollis!
Do you know that? In spite of all
your tricks—

In spite of Pym! Your Pym that
shrank from me!

Eliot would have contrived it other-
wise!

(To a Messenger.) In truth? This
slip, tell Lane, contains as much
As I can call to mind about the
matter.

(To HOLLIS.) Eliot would have dis-
dained . . .

(Calling after the Messenger.) And
Radcliffe, say—

The only person who could answer
Pym—

Is safe in prison, just for that!

(Continuing to HOLLIS.) Well—
well—

It had not been recorded in that
case,

I baffled you!

(To CARLISLE.) Nay, girl, why look
so grieved?

All's gained without the King! You
saw Pym quail?

. . . What shall I do when they
acquit me, think you,

But tranquilly resume my task as
though

Nothing had intervened since I pro-
posed

To call that traitor to account! Such
tricks,

Trust me, shall not be played a
second time—

Even against old Laud, with his grey
hair . . .

Your good work, Hollis!—And to
make amends

You, Lucy, shall be there when I im-
peach

Pym and his fellows!

Hol. Wherefore not protest
Against our whole proceeding long

ago?

Why feel indignant now? Why stand
this while

Enduring patiently . . .

Straf. *(To CARLISLE.)* Girl, I'll
tell you—

You—and not Pym . . . you, the
slight graceful girl

Tall for a flowering lily—and not
Charles . . .

Why I stood patient! I was fool
enough

To see the will of England in Pym's
will—

To dream that I had wronged her—
and to wait

Her judgment,—when, behold, in
place of it . . .

(To a Messenger who whispers.) Tell
Lane to answer no such question!

Law . . .

I grapple with their Law! I'm here
to try

My actions by their standard, not my
own!

Their Law allowed that levy . . .
what's the rest

To Pym, or Lane, or any but my-
self?

Car. Then cast not thus your only
chance away—
The King's so weak . . . secure this
chance! 'Twas Vane

—Vane, recollect, who furnished Pym
the notes . . .

Straf. Fit . . . very fit . . . those
precious notes of Vane,

To close the Trial worthily! I feared
Some spice of nobleness might linger
yet

To spoil the character of all the past!

It pleased me . . . and (*rising
passionately*) I will go back and
say

As much—to them—to England!
Follow me!

I have a word to say! There! my
defence

Is done!

(*To CARLISLE.*) Stay . . . why be
proud? Why care to own

My gladness—my surprise? . . . no
—not surprise!

Oh, why insist upon the little pride
Of doing all myself and sparing him.
The pain? Girl, say the triumph is
my King's!

When Pym grew pale, and trembled,
and sank down—

His image was before me . . . could
I fail?

Girl, care not for the past—so indis-
tinct—

Obscure—there's nothing to forgive
in it

'Tis so forgotten! From this day
begins

A new life, founded on a new belief
In Charles . . .

Hol. Pym comes . . . tell Pym
it is unfair!

Appeal to Pym! Hampden—and
Vane! see, Strafford!

Say how unfair . . .

Straf. To Pym? I would
say nothing!

I would not look upon Pym's face
again!

Car. Stay . . . let me have to
think I pressed your hand:

[*Exit STRAFFORD, &c.*]

(*Enter HAMPDEN and VANE.*)

Vane. O Hampden, save that great
misguided man!

Plead Strafford's cause with Pym—I
have remarked

He moved no muscle when we all
spoke loud

Against him . . . you had but to
breathe—he turned

Those kind, large eyes upon you—
kind to all

But Strafford . . . whom I murder!

[*Enter PYM (conversing with the
Solicitor-General, ST. JOHN), the
Managers of the Trial, FIENNES,
RUDYARD, &c.*]

Rud.

Horrible!

Till now all hearts were with you.
. . . I withdraw

For one! Too horrible! Oh, we
mistake

Your purpose, Pym . . . you cannot
snatch away

The last spar from the drowning
man!

Fien.

He talks

With St. John of it—see how quietly!

[*To other PRESBYTERIANS.*] You'll
join us? Mind, we own he
merits death—

But this new course is monstrous!
Vane, take heart!

This Bill of his Attainder shall not
have

One true man's hand to it.

Vane.

But hear me, Pym!

Confront your Bill—your own Bill
. . . what is it?

You cannot catch the Earl on any
charge . . .

No man will say the Law has hold of
him

On any charge . . . and therefore
you resolve

To take the general sense on his
desert,—

As though no Law existed, and we
met

To found one! You refer to every
man

To speak his thought upon this
hideous mass

Of half-borne out assertions—dubious
hints

Hereafter to be cleared—distortions
—aye,

And wild inventions. Every man is
saved

The task of fixing any single charge
On Strafford: he has but to see in
him

The Enemy of England . . .

Pym. A right scruple!
I have heard some called England's
Enemy

With less consideration.

Vane. Pity me!

Me—brought so low—who hoped to
do so much

For England—her true Servant—
Pym, your friend . . .

Indeed you made me think I was
your friend!

But I have murdered Strafford. . . .
I have been

The instrument of this! who shall
remove

That memory from me?

Pym. I absolve you, *Vane*!
Take you no care for aught that you
have done!

Vane. Dear Hampden, not this
Bill! Reject this Bill!

He staggers thro' the ordeal . . . let
him go!

Strew no fresh fire before him!
Plead for us!

With *Pym* . . . what God is he, to
have no heart

Like ours, yet make us love him?

Rud. Hampden, plead
For us! When Strafford spoke your
eyes were thick

With tears . . . save him, dear
Hampden!

Hamp. England speaks
Louder than Strafford! Who are we,
to play

The generous pardoner at her ex-
pense—

Magnanimously waive advantages—
And if he conquer us . . . ap-
plaud his skill?

Vane. (To *Pym*.) He was your
friend!

Pym. I have heard that before.

Fien. But England trusts you . . .

Hamp. Shame be his, who turns
The opportunity of serving her
She trusts him with, to his own mean
account—

Who would look nobly frank at her
expense!

Fien. I never thought it could have
come to this!

Pym. (Turning from *ST. JOHN*).
But I have made myself familiar,
Fiennes,

With that one thought—have walked,
and sat, and slept,

That thought before me! I have
done such things,

Being the chosen man that should
destroy

This Strafford! You have taken up
that thought

To play with—for a gentle stimu-
lant—

To give a dignity to idler life
By the dim prospect of this deed to
come . . .

But ever with the softening, sure
belief,

That all would come some strange
way right at last!

Fien. Had we made out some
weightier charge . . .

Pym. You say
That these are petty charges! Can
we come

To the real charge at all? There he
is safe!

In tyranny's stronghold! Apostasy
Is not a crime—Treachery not a

crime!

The cheek burns, the blood tingles,
when you name

Their names, but where's the power
to take revenge

Upon them? We must make occasion
serve:

The Oversight, pay for the Giant Sir
That mocks us!

Rud. But this unexampled
course—

This Bill . . .

Pym. By this, we roll the
clouds away

Of Precedent and Custom, and at once
 Bid the great light which God has set in all,
 The conscience of each bosom, shine upon
 The guilt of Strafford: each shall lay his hand
 Upon his breast, and say if this one man
 Deserve to die, or no, by those he sought
 First to undo.
Fien. You, Vane—you answer him!
Vane. Pym, you see farthest . . . I can only see
 Strafford . . . I'd not pass over that pale corse
 For all beyond!
Rud. and others. Pym, you would look so great!
 Forgive him! He would join us! now he finds
 How false the King has been! The pardon, too,
 Should be your own! You should bear to Strafford
 The pardon of the Commons!
Pym. (*Starting.*) Meet him? Strafford?
 Have we to meet once more, then? Be it so!
 And yet—the prophecy seemed half fulfilled
 When, at the trial, as he gazed—my youth—
 Our friendship—all old thoughts came back at once
 And left me, for a time . . .
Vane (*aside to RUDYARD*). Moved, is he not?
Pym. To-morrow we discuss the points of law
 With Lane . . . to-morrow!
Vane. Time enough, dear Pym! See, he relents! I knew he would relent!
Pym. The next day, Haselrig, you introduce,
 The Bill of his Attainder. (*After a pause.*) Pray for me!

SCENE III.—*Whitehall.**The KING.*

Cha. Strafford, you are a Prince!
 Not to reward you
 —Nothing does that—but only for a whim!
 My noble servant!—To defend himself
 Thus irresistibly . . . withholding aught
 That seemed to implicate us!
 We have done
 Less gallantly by Strafford! Well, the future
 Must recompense the past.
 She tarries long!
 I understand you, Strafford, now!
 The scheme—
 Carlisle's mad scheme—he'll sanction it, I fear,
 For love of me! 'Twas too precipitate:
 Before the Army's fairly on its march,
 He'll be at large: no matter . . .
 Well, Carlisle!

(Enter PYM.)

Pym. Fear me not, Sire . . . my mission is to save,
 This time!
Cha. To break thus on me!—Un-announced . . .
Pym. It is of Strafford I would speak.
Cha. No more
 Of Strafford! I have heard too much from you!
Pym. I spoke, Sire, for the People: will you hear
 A word upon my own account?
Cha. Of Strafford?
(Aside.) So, turns the tide already?
 Have we tamed
 The insolent brawler?—Strafford's brave defence
 Is swift in its effect! (*To PYM.*)
 Lord Strafford, Sir,
 Has spoken for himself!
Pym. Sufficiently,

I would apprise you of the novel
course

The people take: the Trial fails, . . .

Cha. Yes—yes—

We are aware, Sir: for your part
in it

Means shall be found to thank you.

Pym. Pray you, read

This schedule! (*as the KING reads it*)

I would learn from your own
mouth

—(It is a matter much concerning
me)—

Whether, if two Estates of England
shall concede

The death of Strafford, on the grounds
set forth

Within that parchment, you, Sire,
can resolve

To grant your full consent to it.
That Bill

Is framed by me: if you determine,
Sire,

That England's manifested will shall
guide

Your judgment, ere another week
that will

Shall manifest itself. If not,—I cast
Aside the measure.

Cha. . . . You can hinder, then,
The introduction of that Bill?

Pym. I can.

Cha. He is my friend, Sir: I have
wronged him: mark you,

I had I not wronged him—this might
be!—You think

Because you hate the Earl . . . (turn
not away—

We know you hate him)—no one else
could love

Strafford . . . but he has saved me
—many times—

Think what he has endured . . .
proud too . . . you feel

What he endured!—And, do you
know one strange,

One frightful thing? We all have
used that man

As though he had been ours . . . with
not a source

Of happy thoughts except in us . . .
and yet

Strafford has children, and a home as
well,

Just as if we had never been! . . .
Ah, Sir,

You are moved—you—a solitary man
Wed to your cause—to England if
you will!

Pym. Yes . . . think, my soul . . .
to England! Draw not back!

Cha. Prevent that Bill, Sir . . .
Oh, your course was fair

Till now! Why, in the end, 'tis I
should sign

The warrant for his death! You have
said much

That I shall ponder on; I never
meant

Strafford should serve me any more:
I take

The Commons' counsel: but this Bill
is yours—

Not worthy of its leader . . . care
not, Sir,

For that, however! I will quite
forget

You named it to me! You are satis-
fied?

Pym. Listen to me, Sire! Eliot
laid his hand,

Wasted and white, upon my forehead
once;

Wentworth . . . he's gone now! . . .
has talked on, whole nights,

And I beside him; Hampden loves
me; Sire,

How can I breathe and not wish
England well—

And her King well?

Cha. I thank you, Sir! You leave
That King his servant! Thanks, Sir

Pym. Let me speak
—Who may not speak again! whose

spirit yearns
For a cool night after this wear-

day!
—Who would not have my heart turn

sicker yet
In a new task, more fatal, more august

More full of England's utter weal or
woe . . .

I thought, Sire, could I find myself
with you—

After this Trial—alone—as man to man—

I might say something—warn you—
pray you—save you—

Mark me, King Charles, save—you !
But God must do it. Yet I warn
you, Sire—

(With Strafford's faded eyes yet full
on me)

As you would have no deeper question
moved

“How long the Many shall endure
the One” . . .

Assure me, Sire, if England shall
assent

To Strafford's death, you will not
interfere !

Or—

Cha. God forsakes me ! I am in
a net . . .

I cannot move ! Let all be as you
say !

(*Enter CARLISLE.*)

Car. He loves you—looking beau-
tiful with joy

Because you sent me ! he would spare
you all

The pain ! he never dreamed you
would forsake

Your servant in the evil day—nay, see
Your scheme returned ! That gener-
ous heart of his !

He needs it not—or, needing it, dis-
dains

A course that might endanger you—
you, Sire,

Whom Strafford from his inmost
soul . . .

[*Seeing Pym.*] No fear—

No fear for Strafford ! all that's true
and brave

On your own side shall help us ! we
are now

Stronger than ever !

Ha—what, Sire, is this ?

All is not well ! What parchment
have you there ?

(*CHARLES drops it, and exits.*)

Pym. Sire, much is saved us both :
farewell !

Car.

Stay—stay—

This cursed measure—you'll not dare
—you mean

To frighten Charles ! This Bill—
look—

(*As Pym reads it.*)

Why, your lip

Whitens—-you could not read one line
to me

Your voice would falter so ! It shakes
you now—

And will you dare . . .

Pym. No recreant yet to her !

The great word went from England to
my soul,

And I arose ! The end is very near !
(*Exit.*)

Car. I save him ! All have shrunk
from him beside—

'Tis only I am left ! Heaven will
make strong

The hand as the true heart ! Then
let me die !
(*Exit.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Whitehall.*

HOLLIS, CARLISLE.

Hol. Tell the King, then ! Come
in with me !

Car. Not so !
He must not hear, 'till it succeeds !

Hol. Vain ! Vain !
No dream was half so vain—you'll
rescue Strafford

And outwit Pym ! I cannot tell
you . . . girl,

The block pursues me—all the hideous
show . . .

To-day . . . is it to-day ? And all
the while

He's sure of the King's pardon . . .
think, I have

To tell this man he is to die !

The King
May rend his hair, for me ! I'll not
see Strafford !

Car. Only, if I succeed, remember
—Charles

Has saved him! He would hardly
value life
Unless his gift.

My staunch friends wait!

Go in

You must go in to Charles!

Hol. And all beside
Left Strafford long ago—the King has
signed

The warrant for his death . . . the
Queen was sick

Of the eternal subject! For the
Court,—

The Trial was amusing in its way
Only too much of it . . . the Earl
withdrew

In time! But you—fragile—alone—
so young!

Amid rude mercenaries—you devised
A plan to save him! Even tho' it
fails

What shall reward you?

Car. I may go, you think,
To France with him? And you re-
ward me, friend!

Who lived with Strafford even from
his youth.

Before he set his heart on state-affairs
And they bent down that noble brow
of his—

I have learned somewhat of his latter
life

And all the future I shall know—but,
Hollis,

I ought to make his youth my own as
well!

Tell me—when he is saved!

Hol. My gentle girl,
He should know all—should love
you—but 'tis vain!

Car. No—no—too late now! Let
him love the King!

'Tis the King's scheme! I have your
word—remember!

We'll keep the old delusion up! But,
hush!

Hush! Each of us has work to do
beside!

Go to the King! I hope—Hollis—I
hope!

Say nothing of my scheme! Hush,
while we speak

Think where He is! Now for my
gallant friends! (*Exit.*)

Hol. Where He is! Calling wildly
upon Charles—

Guessing his fate—pacing the prison-
floor . . .

Let the King tell him! I'll not look
on Strafford! (*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—*The Tower.*

STRAFFORD *sitting with his Children.*
They sing.

*O bell' andare
Per barca in mare,
Verso la sera
Di Primavera!*

William. (The boat's in the broad
moonlight all this while)

*Verso la sera
Di Primavera.*

And the boat shoots from underneath
the moon

Into the shadowy distance—only still
You hear the dipping oar,

Verso la sera . . .

And faint—and fainter—and then all's
quite gone,

Music and light and all, like a lost
star.

Anne. But you should sleep, father:
you were to sleep!

Straf. I do sleep, dearest; or if
not—you know

There's such a thing as . . .

Wil. You're too tired to sleep?
Straf. It will come by-and-by and
all day long,

In that old quiet house I told you of:
We'll sleep safe there.

Anne. Why not in Ireland?

Straf. Ah!

Too many dreams!—That song's for
Venice, William:

You know how Venice looks upon
the map . . .

Isles that the mainland hardly can let
go?

Wil. You've been to Venice, father?

Straf. I was young then.

Wil. A city with no King; that's why I like

Even a song that comes from Venice!

Straf. William!

Wil. Oh, I know why! Anne, do you love the King?

But I'll see Venice for myself one day.

Straf. See many lands, boy—England last of all,—

That way you'll love her best.

Wil. Why do men say You sought to ruin her, then!

Straf. Ah . . . they say that.

Wil. Why?

Straf. I suppose they must have words to say,

As you to sing.

Anne. But they make songs beside:

Last night I heard one, in the street beneath,

That named you . . . Oh, the names!

Wil. Don't mind her, father! They soon left off when I called out to them!

Straf. We shall so soon be out of it, my boy!

Tis not worth while: who heeds a foolish song?

Wil. Why, not the King!

Straf. Well: it has been the fate Of better men, and yet . . . why not feel sure

That Time, who in the twilight comes to mend

All the fantastic Day's caprice—consign

Unto the ground once more the ignoble Term,

And raise the Genius on his orb again—

That Time will do me right?

Anne. (Shall we sing, William? He does not look thus when we sing.)

Straf. For Ireland,—Something is done . . . too little, but enough

To show what might have been:—

Wil. (I have no heart

To sing now! Anne, how very sad he looks!

Oh, I so hate the King for all he says!)

Straf. Forsook them! What, the common songs will run

That I forsook the People? Nothing more?

. . . Aye, Fame, the scribe, will pause awhile, no doubt,

Turning a deaf ear to her thousand slaves

Noisy to be enrolled,—will register All curious glosses, subtle notices,

Ingenious clearings-up one fain would see

Beside that plain inscription of The Name—

The Patriot Pym, or the Apostate Strafford!

(*The children resume their song timidly, but break off.*)

Enter HOLLIS and an Attendant.

Straf. No . . . Hollis? in good time!—Who is he?

Hol.

That must be present.

Straf.

Ah—I understand—They will not let me see poor Laud alone!

How politic! They'd use me by degrees

To solitude: and just as you came in I was solicitous what life to lead

When Strafford's "not so much as Constable

"In the King's service." Is there any means

To keep one's self awake? What would you do

After this bustle, Hollis, in my place?

Hol. Strafford . . .

Straf. Observe, not but that Pym and you

Will find me news enough—news I shall hear

Under a quince tree by a fish-pond side

At Wentworth. Or, a better project now—

What if when all is over, and the
Saints

Reign, and the Senate goes on swim-
mingly, —

What if I venture up, some day,
unseen

To saunter through the Town — notice
how Pym,

The Tribune, likes Whitehall — drop
quietly

Into a tavern — hear a point discussed —
As, whether Strafford's name were

John or Richard —
And be myself appealed to . . . I,

who shall
Myself have near forgotten !

Hol. I would speak . . .

Straf. Then you shall speak, — not
now : I want, just now,

To hear the sound of my own tongue.
This place

Is full of ghosts !

Hol. Will you not hear me,
Strafford ?

Straf. Oh, readily ! . . . Only, one
droll thing more, —

The minister ! Who will advise the
King,

And yet have health — children, for
aught I know !

— My patient pair of traitors ! Ah
. . . but, William —

Does not his cheek grow thin ?

Will. 'Tis you look thin,
Father !

Straf. A scamper o'er the breezy
wolds

Sets all to rights !

Hol. You cannot sure forget
A prison-roof is o'er you, Strafford !

Straf. No,
Why, no. I would not touch on
that, the first.

I left you that. Well, Hollis ?

. . . Say at once
The King could find no time to set
me free !

A mask at Theobald's ?

Hol. Hush . . . no such affair
Detains him.

Straf. True : what needs so great
a matter ?

The Queen's lip may be sore ! —

Well : when he pleases, —

Only, I want the air : it vexes one
To be pent up so long !

Hol. The King . . . I bear
His message, Strafford . . . pray you,
let me speak !

Straf. Go, William ! Anne, try
o'er your song again !

(*The children retire.*)

They shall be loyal, friend, at all
events.

I know your message : you have
nothing new

To tell me : from the first I guessed
as much.

I know, instead of coming here at
once —

Leading me forth before them by the
hand, —

I know the King will leave the door
ajar

As though I were escaping . . . let
me fly

While the mob gapes upon some show
prepared

On the other side of the river !

Hol. (*to his Companion.*) Tell him
all ;

I knew my throat would thicken
thus . . . Speak, you !

Straf. 'Tis all one — I forgive him.
Let me have

The order of release !

. . . I've heard, as well,
Of certain poor manœuvrings to
avoid

The granting pardon at his proper
risk ;

First, he must prattle somewhat to
the Lords —

Must talk a trifle with the Commons
first —

Be grieved I should abuse his con-
fidence,

And far from blaming them, and . . .
. . . Where's the order ?

Hol. Spare me !

Straf. Why . . . he'd not
have me steal away ?

— With an old doublet and a steeple
hat

Like Prynne's? Be smuggled into
France, perhaps?

Hollis, 'tis for my children! 'Twas
for them

I e'er consented to stand day by day
And give those Puritans the best of
words

Be patient—speak when called upon
—observe

Their rules,—and not give all of them
the lie!

Hol. No—Strafford . . . no escape
. . . no . . . dearest Strafford!

Straf. What's in that boy of mine
that he should be

Son to a prison-breaker? I shall
stay

And he'll stay with me. Charles
should know as much—

He too has children!

(*Turning to HOLLIS'S companion.*)

Ah, you feel for me!

No need to hide that face! Though
it have looked

Upon me from the judgment-seat
. . . I know

Strangely, that somewhere it has
looked on me . . .

Still there is One who does not come
—there's One

That shut out Heaven from me . . .

Hol. Think on it then!

On Heaven . . . and calmly . . . as
one . . . as one to die!

Straf. Die! True, friend, all must
die, and all must need

Forgiveness: I forgive him from my
soul.

Hol. Be constant, now . . . be
grand and brave . . . be now
Just as when . . . Oh, I cannot stay
for words . . .

'Tis a world's wonder . . . but . . .
but . . . you must die!

Straf. Sir, if your errand is to set
me free

This heartless jest will . . .

Hollis—you turn white,
And your lip shivers!—What if . . .

Oh, we'll end,
We'll end this! See this paper—
warm . . . feel . . . warm

With lying next my heart! Whose
hand is there?

Whose promise? Read! Read loud!
For God to hear!

"Strafford shall take no hurt" . . .
read it, I say!

"In person, honour, nor estate." . . .
Hol. The King . . .

Straf. I could unking him by a
breath! You sit

Where Loudon sate . . . Loudon,
who came to tell

The certain end, and offer me Pym's
pardon

If I'd forsake the King—and I stood
firm

On my King's faith! The King who
lived . . .

Hol.

To sign

The warrant for your death.

Straf. "Put not your trust

"In Princes, neither in the sons of men,
"In whom is no salvation!" On

that King—

Upon his head . . .

Cha. O Hollis, he will curse me!

Hol. The scaffold is prepared—
they wait for you—

He has consented . . .

Cha. No, no—stay first—Strafford!
You would not see me perish at your
foot . . .

It was wrong from me! Only curse
me not!

The Queen had cruel eyes! And
Vane declared . . .

And I believed I could have rescued
you . . .

Strafford—they threaten me! and . . .
well, speak now,
And let me die!—

Hol. (*To STRAFFORD.*) As you
hope grace from God,
Be merciful to this most wretched
man!

Voices from within.

Verso la sera

Di Primavera.

Straf. (*After a pause.*) You'll be
good to those children, Sire?
I know

You'll not believe her even should
the Queen
Think they take after one they never
saw !
I had intended that my son should live
A stranger to these matters . . . but
you are
So utterly deprived of friends ! He
too
Must serve you—will you not be good
to him ?
Stay—Sire—stay—do not promise—
do not swear !
And, Hollis—do the best you can
for me !
I've not a soul to trust to : Wandes-
ford's dead—
And you've got Radcliffe safe—and
Laud is here. . . .
I've had small time of late for my
affairs—
But I'll trust any of you . . . Pym
himself—
No one could hurt them : there's an
infant, too—
. . . . These tedious cares ! Your
Majesty could spare them—
But 'tis so awkward—dying in a
hurry !
. . . . Nay—Pardon me, my King !
I had forgotten
Your education, trials, and tempta-
tions
And weakness . . . I have said a
peevish word—
But, mind I bless you at the last !
You know
'Tis between you and me . . . what
has the world
To do with it ? Farewell !
Cha. (At the door.) Balfour !
Balfour !
. . . . What, die ? Strafford to die ?
This Strafford here ?
Balfour ! . . . Nay Strafford, do not
speak . . . Balfour !
Enter BALFOUR.
The Parliament . . . go to them—
I grant all
Demands ! Their sittings shall be
permanent—

Tell them to keep their money if they
will . . .
I'll come to them for every coat I
wear
And every crust I eat, only I choose
To pardon Strafford—Strafford—my
brave friend !
Bal. (Aside.) Is he mad, Hollis ?
Cha. Strafford, now, to die !
. . . . But the Queen . . . ah, the
Queen !—make haste, Balfour !
—You never heard the people howl
for blood,
Beside !
Bal. Your Majesty may hear them
now :
The walls can hardly keep their
murmurs out :
Please you retire !
Cha. Take all the troops, Balfour !
Bal. There are some hundred thou-
sand of the crowd.
Cha. Come with me, Strafford !
You'll not fear them, friend !
Straf. Balfour, say nothing to the
world of this !
I charge you, as a dying man, forget
You gazed upon this agony of one . . .
Of one . . . or if . . . why you may
say, Balfour,
The King was sorry—very—'tis no
shame !
Yes, you may say he even wept,
Balfour,—
And that I walked the lighter to the
block
Because of it. I shall walk lightly,
Sire !
—For I shall save you . . . save you
at the last !
Earth fades, Heaven dawns on me . . .
I shall wake next
Before God's throne : the moment's
close at hand
When Man the first, last time, has
leave to lay
His whole heart bare before its
Maker—leave
To clear up the long error of a life
And choose one happiness for ever-
more.
With all mortality about me, Charles,

The sudden wreck—the dregs—the
 violent death . . .
 I'll pray for you! Thro' all the
 Angel-song
 Shall penetrate one weak and quiver-
 ing prayer—
 I'll say how good you are . . . in-
 wardly good
 And pure . . . (*The KING falls:*
HOLLIS raises him.)
 Be witness, he could not prevent
 My death! I'll go—ere he awakes—
 go now!
 All must be ready—did you say,
 Balfour,
 The crowd began to murmur?—
 They'll be kept
 Too late for sermon at St. Antho-
 lin's!
 Now—but tread softly—children are
 at play
 In the next room—Ah, just my chil-
 dren—Hollis!
 —Or . . . no—support the King!
 (*A door is unbarred.*)
 Hark . . . they are here!
 Stay, Hollis!—Go, Balfour! I'll
 follow . . .
 (*CARLISLE entering with many*
Attendants.)
Car. Me!
 Follow me, Strafford, and be saved!
 . . . The King?
 (*To the KING.*) Well—as you ordered
 . . . They are ranged without . . .
 The convoy . . . (*Seeing the KING's*
state.)
 (*To STRAFFORD.*) You know all
 then! Why, I thought
 It looked so well that Charles should
 save you—Charles
 Alone . . . 'tis shame that you should
 owe it me—
 Me . . . no, not shame! Strafford,
 you'll not feel shame
 At being saved by me?
Hol. All true! Oh, Strafford,
 She saves you! all her deed . . .
 this girl's own deed
 —And is the boat in readiness? . . .
 You, friend,

Are Billingsley, no doubt! Speak to
 her, Strafford!
 See how she trembles . . . waiting
 for your voice!
 The world's to learn its bravest story
 yet!
Car. Talk afterward! Long nights
 in France enough
 To sit beneath the vines and talk of
 home!
Straf. You love me, girl! Ah,
 Strafford can be loved
 As well as Vane! I could escape,
 then?
Car. Haste . . .
 Advance the torches, Bryan!
Straf. I will die!
 They call me proud . . . but England
 had no right
 When she encountered me—her
 strength to mine—
 To find the chosen foe a craven!
 Girl,
 I fought her to the utterance—I fell—
 I am hers now . . . and I will die!
 Beside
 The lookers-on! Eliot is all about
 This place with his most uncomplain-
 ing brow!
Car. Strafford!
Straf. I think if you could know
 how much
 I love you, you would be repaid, my
 girl!
Car. Then, for my sake!
Straf. Even for your sweet
 sake . . .
 I stay.
Hol. For their sake!
Straf. I bequeath a stain . . .
 Leave me! Girl, humour me and let
 me die!
Hol. No way to draw him hence—
 Carlisle—no way?
Car. (*Suddenly to CHARLES.*) Bid
 him escape . . . wake, King! Bid
 him escape!
Straf. (*Looks earnestly at him.*)
 Yes, I will go! Die, and forsake
 the King?
 I'll not draw back from the last
 service.

Car. Strafford !

Straf. And, after all, what
is disgrace to me ?
Let us come, girl ! . . . That it
should end this way !
Lead then . . . but I feel strangely
. . . it was not
To end this way !

Car. Lean—lean on me !

Straf. My King !
Oh, had he trusted me—his Friend of
friends—

Had he but trusted me !

Car. Leave not the King—
I can support him, Hollis !

Straf. (*Starting as they approach
the door at the back.*)

Not this way :
This gate . . . I dreamed of it . . .
this very gate !

Car. It opens on the river—our
good boat
Is moored below—our friends are
there !

Straf. The same !
Only with something ominous and
dark,

Fatal, inevitable . . .

Car. Strafford ! Strafford !

Straf. Not by this gate . . . I feel
it will be there !
I dreamed of it, I tell you . . . touch
it not !

Car. To save the King, —Strafford,
to save the King !

(*As STRAFFORD opens the door, PYM
is discovered with HAMPDEN,
VANE, &c. STRAFFORD falls
back to the front of the stage :
PYM follows slowly and confronts
him.*)

Pym. Have I done well ? Speak,
England ! Whose great sake
I still have laboured for, with disregard
To my own heart,—for whom my
youth was made
Barren, my future dark, to offer up
Her sacrifice—this man, this Went-
worth here—
That walked in youth with me—loved
me it may be,

And whom, for his forsaking England's
cause,

I hunted by all means (trusting that
she

Would sanctify all means) even to the
grave

That yawn for him. And saying this,
I feel

No bitter pang than first I felt, the
hour

I swore that Wentworth might leave
us,—but I

Would never leave him : I do leave
him now !

I render up my charge (be witness,
God !)

To England who imposed it ! I have
done

Her bidding—poorly, wrongly,—it
may be

With ill effects—for I am but a
man . . .

Still, I have done my best, my very
best,

Not faltering for a moment ! I have
done !

(*After a pause.*)

And that said, I will say . . . yes, I
will say

I never loved but this man—David
not

More Jonathan ! Even thus, I love
him now :

And look for my chief portion in that
world

Where great hearts led astray are
turned again,

(Soon it may be . . . and . . . yes
. . . it will be soon :

My mission over, I shall not live
long !)—

. . . Aye here I know I talk—and I
will talk

(Of England—and her great reward—
as all

I look for there ; but in my inmost
heart

Believe I think of stealing quite away
To walk once more with Wentworth

—with my friend
Purged from all error, glorious
renewed,

And Eliot shall not blame us! Then indeed . . .

This is no meeting, Wentworth! Tears rise up

Too hot . . . A thin mist—is it blue?—enwraps

The face I loved so! Then, shall the meeting be!

Then—then—then—I may kiss that hand, I know!

Straf. (Walks calmly up to Pym and offers his hand.)

I have loved England too; we'll meet then, Pym!

As well to die! Youth is the time—our youth,

To think and to decide on a great course:

Age with its action follows; but 'tis dreary

To have to alter one's whole life in age—

The time past, the strength gone! as well die now.

When we meet, Pym, I'd be set right—not now!

I'd die as I have lived . . . too late to change!

Best die. Then if there's any fault, it will

Be smothered up; much best! You'll be too busy

With your hereafter, you will have achieved

Too many triumphs to be always dwelling

Upon my downfall, Pym? Poor little Laud

May dream his dream out of a perfect Church

In some blind corner? And there's no one left . . .

(He glances on the KING.)

I trust the King now wholly to you, Pym!

And yet . . . I know not! What if with this weakness . . .

And I shall not be there . . . And he'll betray

His friends—if he has any . . . And he's false . . .

And loves the Queen, and . . .

Oh, my fate is nothing
Nothing! But not that awful load
. . . not that!

Pym, save the King! Pym, save him! Stay—you shall . . .

For you love England! I, that am dying, think

What I must see . . . 'tis here . . . all here! My God!

Let me but gasp out, in one word of fire,

How Thou wilt plague him, satiating Hell!

What? England that you love—our land—become

A green and putrefying charnel, left

Our children . . . some of us have children, Pym—

Some who, without that, still must ever wear

A darkened brow, an over-serious look,

And never properly be young . . . No word!

You will not say a word—to me—to Him!

(Turning to CHARLES.)

Speak to him . . . as you spoke to me . . . that day!

Nay, I will let you pray to him, my King—

Pray to him! He will kiss your feet, I know!

What if I curse you? Send a strong curse forth

Clothed from my heart, lapped round with horror, till

She's fit, with her white face, to walk the world

Scaring kind natures from your cause and you—

Then to sit down with you, at the board-head,

The gathering for prayer . . . Vane. Oh speak, Pym! Speak!

Straf. . . . Creep up, and quietly follow each one home—

You—you—you—be a nestling Care for each

To sleep with, hardly moaning in his
dreams . . .

She gnaws so quietly . . . until he
starts . . .

Gets off with half a heart eaten
away . . .

Oh, you shall 'scape with less, if she's
my child!

Iane. (To Pym.) We never thought
of this . . . surely not dreamed

Of this . . . it never can . . . could
come to this!

Pym. (After a pause.) If Eng-
land should declare her will to
me . . .

Straf. No—not for England, now
—not for Heaven, now . . .

See, Pym for me! My sake! I
kneel to you!

There . . . I will thank you for the
death . . . my friend,

This is the meeting . . . you will
send me proud

To my chill grave! Dear Pym—I'll
love you well!

Save him for me, and let me love you
well!

Pym. England— I am 'hine own!
Dost thou exact

That service? I obey thee to the
end!

Straf. (As he totters out.) O God, I
shall die first—I shall die first!

(*Curtain falls.*)

ke! I
for the
ou will
m—I'll
ove you
e own!
to the

(God, I
first!
n falls.)

SORDELLO

1840

BOOK THE FIRST

Who will, may hear Sordello's story
told;
His story? Who believes me shall
behold
The man, pursue his fortunes to the
end
Like me; for as the friendless people's
friend
Spied from his hill-top once, despite
the din
And dust of multitudes, Pentapoli
Named o' the Naked Arm, I single out
Sordello, compassed murkily about
With ravage of six long sad hundred
years:
Only believe me. Ye believe?
Verona . . . Never, I should warn
you first,
Of my own choice had this, if not the
worst
Yet not the best expedient, served to
tell
A story I could body forth so well
By making speak, myself kept out
of view,
The very man as he was wont to do,
And leaving you to say the rest for
him:
Since, though I might be proud to
see the dim
Abysmal Past divide its hateful surge,
Letting of all men this one man
emerge
Because it pleased me, yet, that
moment past,
I should delight in watching first to last
His progress as you watch it, not a
whit

More in the secret than yourselves
who sit
Fresh-chapleted to listen: but it seems
Your setters-forth of unexampled
themes,
Makers of quite new men, producing
them
Had best chalk broadly on each ves-
ture's hem
The wearer's quality, or take his stand
Motley on back and pointing-pole in
hand
Beside them; so for once I face ye,
friends,
Summoned together from the world's
four ends,
Dropped down from Heaven or cast
up from Hell,
To hear the story I propose to tell.
Confess now, poets know the dragnet's
trick,
Catching the dead if Fate denies the
quick
And shaming her; 'tis not for Fate
to choose
Silence or song because she can refuse
Real eyes to glisten more, real hearts
to ache
Less oft, real brows turn smother for
our sake:
I have experienced something of her
spite;
But there's a realm wherein she has
no right
And I have many lovers: say but few
Friends Fate accords me? Here they
are: now view
The host I muster! Many a lighted
face
Foul with no vestige of the grave's
disgrace;

What else should tempt them back
 to taste our air
 Except to see how their successors fare?
 My audience: and they sit, each
 ghostly man
 Striving to look as living as he can,
 Brother by breathing brother; thou
 art set,
 Clear-witted critic, by . . . but I'll
 not fret
 A wondrous soul of them, nor move
 Death's spleen
 Who loves not to unlock them.
 Friends! I mean
 The living in good earnest—ye elect
 Chiefly for love—suppose not I reject
 Judicious praise, who contrary shall
 peep
 Some fit occasion forth, for fear ye
 sleep,
 To glean your bland approvals.
 Then, appear,
 Verona! stay—thou, spirit, come not
 near
 Now—nor this time desert thy cloudy
 place
 To scare me, thus employed, with
 that pure face!
 I need not fear this audience, I make
 free
 With them, but then this is no place
 for thee!
 The thunder-phrase of the Athenian,
 grown
 Up out of memories of Marathon,
 Would echo like his own sword's
 grinding screech
 Braying a Persian shield,—the silver
 speech
 Of Sidney's self, the starry paladin,
 Turn intense as a trumpet sounding in
 The knights to tilt—wert thou to
 hear! What heart
 Have I to play my puppets, bear my
 part
 Before these worthies?
 Lo, the Past is hurled
 In twain: upthrust, out-staggering
 on the world,
 Subsiding into shape, a darkness rears
 Its outline, kindles at the core, ap-
 pears

Verona. 'Tis six hundred years and
 more
 Since an event. The Second Frie-
 drich wore
 The purple, and the Third Honorius
 filled
 The holy chair. That autumn eve
 was stilled:
 At last remains of sunset dimly burned
 O'er the far forests like a torch-flame
 turned
 By the wind back upon its bearer's
 hand
 In one long flare of crimson; as a
 brand
 The woods beneath lay black. A
 single eye
 From all Verona cared for the soft sky:
 But, gathering in its ancient market-
 place,
 Talked group with restless group—
 and not a face
 But wrath made livid, for among
 them were
 Death's staunch purveyors, such as
 have in care
 To feast him. Fear had long since
 taken root
 In every breast, and now these crushed
 its fruit,
 The ripe hate, like a wine: to note
 the way
 It worked while each grew drunk!
 men grave and grey
 Stood, with shut eyelids, rocking to
 and fro,
 Letting the silent luxury trickle slow
 About the hollows where a heart
 should be;
 But the young gulped with a delirious
 glee
 Some foretaste of their first debauch
 in blood
 At the fierce news: for, be it under-
 stood,
 Envoys apprised Verona that her
 prince
 Count Richard of Saint Boniface,
 joined since
 A year with Azzo, Este's Lord, to
 thrust
 Taurello Salinguerra, prime in trust

With Ecelin Romano, from the seat
 Ferrara,—over zealous in the
 And stumbling on a peril unawares,
 Was captive, "trammelled in his
 proper snare,"
 They phrase it, "taken by his own
 intrigue:"
 Immediate succour, from the Lombard
 League
 Of fifteen cities that affect the Pope,
 For Azzo therefore and his fellow—
 hope
 Of the Gueft cause, a glory overcast!
 Men's faces, late agape, are now
 aghast:
 Prone is the purple pavice; Este makes
 Mirth for the Devil when he under-
 takes
 To play the Ecelin; as if it cost
 Merely your pushing-by to gain a post
 Like his! The patron tells ye, once
 for all,
 There be sound reasons that prefer-
 ment fall
 On our beloved . . .
 Duke o' the Rood, why not?
 Shouted an Estian, grudge ye such a
 lot?
 The hill-cat boasts some cunning of
 her own,
 Some stealthy trick to better beasts
 unknown
 That quick with prey enough her
 hunger blunts
 And feeds her fat while gaunt the
 lion hunts.
 Taurello, quoth an envoy, as in wane
 Dwelt at Ferrara. Like an osprey fain
 To fly but forced the earth his couch
 to make
 Far inland till his friend the tempest
 wake,
 Waits he the Kaiser's coming; and
 as yet
 That fast friend sleeps, and he too
 sleeps; but let
 Only the billow freshen, and he snuffs
 The aroused hurricane ere it enrougths
 The sea it means to cross because of
 him:
 Sinketh the breeze? His hope-sick
 eye grows dim;

Creep closer on the creature! Every
 day
 Strengthens the Pontiff; Ecelin, they
 say,
 Dozes at Oliero, with dry lips
 Telling upon his perished finger-tips
 How many ancestors are to depose
 Ere he be Satan's Viceroy when the
 doze
 Deposits him in hell; so Guefts re-
 built
 Their houses; not a drop of blood
 was spilt
 When Cino Bocchimpane chanced to
 meet
 Buccio Virtu; God's wafer, and the
 street
 Is narrow! Tutti Santi, think, a-
 swarm
 With Ghibellins, and yet he took no
 harm.
 This could not last. Off Salinguerra
 went
 To Padua, Podestà, with pure intent,
 Said he, my presence, judged the
 single bar
 To permanent tranquillity, may jar
 No longer—so! his back is fairly
 turned?
 The pair of goodly palaces are burned,
 The gardens ravaged, and your Gueft
 is drunk
 A week with joy: the next, his
 laughter sunk
 In sobs of blood, for he found, some
 strange way,
 Old Salinguerra back again; I say,
 Old Salinguerra in the town once
 more
 Uprooting, overturning, flame before
 Blood fetlock-high beneath him;
 Azzo fled;
 Who 'scaped the carnage followed;
 then the dead
 Were pushed aside from Salinguerra's
 throne,
 He ruled once more Ferrara, all
 alone,
 Till Azzo, stunned awhile, revived,
 would pounce
 Coupled with Boniface, like lynx and
 ounce,

On the gorged bird. The burghers
ground their teeth
To see troop after troop encamp be-
neath
I' the standing corn thick o'er the
scanty patch
It took so many patient months to
snatch
Out of the marsh ; while just within
their walls
Men fed on men. Astute Taurello calls
A parley : let the Count wind up the
war !
Richard, light-hearted as a plunging
star,
Agrees to enter for the kindest ends
Ferrara, flanked with fifty chosen
friends,
No horse-boy more for fear your
timid sort
Should fly Ferrara at the bare report.
Quietly through the town they rode,
jog-jog ;
Ten, twenty, thirty . . . curse the
catalogue
Of burnt Guelf houses ! Strange
Taurello shows
Not the least sign of life—whereat
arose
A general growl : How ? With his
victors by ?
I and my Veronese ? My troops and I ?
Receive us, was your word ? so jogged
they on,
Nor laughed their host too openly :
once gone
Into the trap . . .
Six hundred years ago !
Such the time's aspect and peculiar
woe
(Yourselves may spell it yet in
chronicles,
Albeit the worm, our busy brother,
drills
His sprawling path through letters
anciently
Made fine and large to suit some
abbot's eye)
When the new Hohenstauffen dropped
the mask,
Flung John of Brienne's favour from
his casque,

Forswore crusading, had no mind to
leave
Saint Peter's proxy leisure to retrieve
Losses to Otho and to Barbaross,
Or make the Alps less easy to re-
cross ;
And, thus confirming Pope Honorius'
fear,
Was excommunicate that very year.
The triple-bearded Teuton come to
life !
Groaned the Great League ; and,
arming for the strife,
Wide Lombardy, on tiptoe to begin,
Took up, as it was Guelf or Ghibel-
lin,
Its cry ; what cry ?
The Emperor to come !
His crowd of feudatories, all and some
That leapt down with a crash of
swords, spears, shields,
One fighter on his fellow, to our fields,
Scattered anon, took station here and
there,
And carried it, till now, with little
care—
Cannot but cry for him ; how else
rebut
Us longer ? Cliffs an earthquake
suffered jut
In the mid-sea, each domineering
crest
Nothing save such another throe can
wrest
From out (conceive) a certain choke-
weed grown
Since o'er the waters, twine and
tangle thrown
Too thick, too fast accumulating
round,
Too sure to over-riot and confound
Ere long each brilliant islet with itself
Unless a second shock save shoal and
shelf,
Whirling the sea-drift wide : alas, the
ruined
And sullen wreck ! Sunlight to be
diffused
For that ! Sunlight, 'neath which, a
scum at first,
The million fibres of our chokeweed
nurst

Dispread themselves, mantling the
troubled main,
And, shattered by those rocks, took
hold again,
So kindly blazed it—that same blaze
to brood
O'er every cluster of the multitude
Still hazarding new clasps, ties, fila-
ments,
An emulous exchange of pulses, vents
Of nature into nature; till some
growth
Unfancied yet exuberantly clothe
A surface solid now, continuous, one:
The Pope, for us the People, who
begun
The People, carries on the People thus.
To keep that Kaiser off and dwell
with us!
See you?
Or say, Two Principles that live
Each fitly by its Representative:
Hill-cat . . . who called him so, our
gracefullest
Adventurer? the ambiguous stranger-
guest
Of Lombardy (sleek but that ruffling
fur,
Those talons to their sheath!) whose
velvet purr
Soothes jealous neighbours when a
Saxon scout
. . . Arpo or Yoland, is it? one
without
A country or a name, presumes to
couch
Beside their noblest: until men avouch
That of all Houses in the Trevisan
Conrad describes no fitter, rear or van,
Than Ecelo! They laughed as they
enrolled
That name at Milan on the page of
gold
For Godego, Ramon, Marostica,
Artiglion, Bassano, Loria,
And every sheep-cote on the Suabian's
fief!
No laughter when his son, the Lom-
bard Chief
Forsooth, as Barbarossa's path was
bent
To Italy along the Vale of Trent,

Welcomed him at Roncaglia! Sad-
ness now—
The hamlets nested on the Tyrol's
brow,
The Asolan and Euganean hills,
The Rhetian and the Julian, sadness
fills
Them all that Ecelin vouchsafes to
stay
Among and care about them; day by
day
Choosing this pinnacle, the other spot,
A castle building to defend a cot,
A cot built for a castle to defend,
Nothing but castles, castles, nor an
end
To boasts how mountain ridge may
join with ridge
By sunken gallery and soaring bridge—
He takes, in brief, a figure that be-
seems
The griesliest nightmare of the
Church's dreams,
A Signory firm-rooted, unestranged
From its old interests, and nowise
changed
By its new neighbourhood; perchance
the vaunt
Of Otho, "my own Este shall supplant
Your Este," come to pass. The sire
led in
A son as cruel; and this Ecelin
Had sons, in turn, and daughters sly
and tall,
And curling and compliant; but for all
Romano (so they style him) thrives,
that neck
Of his so pinched and white, that
hungry cheek
Proved 'tis some fiend, not him, men's
flesh is meant
To feed: whereas Romano's instru-
ment.
Famous Taurello Salinguerra, sole
I' the world, a tree whose boughs are
slipt the bole
Successively, why should not he shed
blood
To further a design? Men understood
Living was pleasant to him as he wore
His careless surcoat, glanced some
missive o'er,

Propped on his truncheon in the
public way.
Eccelin lifts two withen hands to pray
At Oliero's convent now: so, place
For Azzo, Lion of the . . . why dis-
grace
A worthiness conspicuous near and far
(Mii at Rome while free and consular,
Este at Padua to repulse the Hun)
By trumpeting the Church's princely
son
Styled Patron of Rovigo's Polesine,
Ancona's march, Ferrara's . . . ask,
in fine,
Our chronicles, commenced when
some old monk
Found it intolerable to be sunk
(Vexed to the quick by his revolting
cell)
Quite out of summer while alive and
well:
Ended when by his mat the Prior
stood,
Mid busy promptings of the brother-
hood,
Striving to coax from his decrepit
brains
The reason Father Porphyry took
pains
To blot those ten lines out which
used to stand
First on their charter drawn by Hilde-
brand.
The same night wears. Verona's
rule of yore
Was vested in a certain Twenty-four;
And while within his palace these
debate
Concerning Richard and Ferrara's
fate,
Glide we by clapping doors, with
sudden glare
Of cressets vented on the dark, nor
care
For aught that's seen or heard until
we shut
The smother in, the lights, all noises
but
The carroch's booming; safe at last!
Why strange
Such a recess should lurk behind a
range

Of banquet-rooms? Your finger—
thus—you push
A spring, and the wall opens, would
you rush
Upon the banqueters, select your prey,
Waiting, the slaughter-weapons in the
way
Strewing this very bench, with
sharpened ear
A preconcerted signal to appear;
Or if you simply crouch with beating
heart
Bearing in some voluptuous pageant
part
To startle them. Nor mutes nor mas-
quers now;
Nor any . . . does that one man sleep
whose brow
The dying lamp-flame sinks and rises
o'er?
What woman stood beside him? not
the more
Is he unfastened from the earnest eye,
Because that arras fell between!
Her wise
And lulling words are yet about the
room,
Her presence wholly poured upon
the gloom
Down even to her vesture's creeping
stir:
And so reclines he, saturate with her,
Until an outcry from the square
beneath
Pierces the charm: he springs up,
glad to breathe
Above the cunning element, and
shakes
The stupor off as (look you) morning
breaks
On the gay dress, and, near concealed
by it,
The lean frame like a half-burnt taper,
lit
Erst at some marriage-feast, then laid
away
Till the Armenian bridegroom's dying
day,
In his wool wedding-robe; for he—
for he—
"Gate-vein of this hearts' blood
Lombardy"

(If I should falter now)—for he is
Thine!

Sordello, thy forerunner, Florentine!
A herald-star I know thou didst
absorb

Relentless into the consummate orb
That scared it from its right to roll
along

A sempiternal path with dance and
song

Fulfilling its allotted period
Serenest of the progeny of God
Who yet resigns it not; his darling
stoops

With no quenched lights, desponds
with no blank troops

Of disenfranchised brilliances, for,
blent

Utterly with thee, its shy element
Like thine upburneth prosperous and
clear:

Still, what if I approach the august
sphere

Named now with only one name,
disentwine

That under current soft and argentine
From its fierce mate in the majestic
mass

Leavened as the sea whose fire was
mixt with glass

In John's transcendent vision, launch
once more

That lustre? Dante, pacer of the
shore

Where gluttoned Hell disgorgeth filthiest
gloom,

Unbitten by its whirring sulphur-
spume—

Or whence the grieved and obscure
waters slope

Into a darkness quieted by hope—
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath

God's eye

In gracious twilights where his Chosen
lie,

I would do this! If I should falter
now—

In Mantua-territory half is slough
Half pine-tree forest; maples, scarlet-
oaks

Breed o'er the river-beds; even Mincio
chokes

With sand the summer through; but
'tis morass

In winter up to Mantua walls. There
was

(Some thirty years before this evening's
coil)

One spot reclaimed from the surround-
ing spoil,

Goito; just a castle built amid
A few low mountains; firs and larches
hid

Their main defiles and rings of vine-
yard bound

The rest: some captured creature in
a pound,

Whose artless wonder quite precludes
distress,

Secure beside in its own loveliness,
So peered with airy head, below, above,

The castle at its toils the lapwings love
To glean among at grape-time. Pass

within:

A maze of corridors contrived for sin,
Dusk winding-stairs, dim galleries got

past,

You gain the inmost chambers, gain
at last

A maple-panelled room: that haze
which seems

Floating about the panel, if there
gleams

A sunbeam over it will turn to gold
And in light-graven characters unfold

The Arab's wisdom everywhere; what
shade

Marred them a moment, those slim
pillars made,

Cut like a company of palms to prop
The roof, each kissing top entwined

with top,

Leaning together; in the carver's
mind

Some knot of bacchanals, flushed
cheek combined

With straining forehead, shoulders
purpled, hair

Diffused between, who in a goat-skin
bear

A vintage; graceful sister-palms: but
quick

To the main wonder now. A vault,
see; thick

Black shade about the ceiling, though
 fine slits
 Across the buttress suffer light by
 fits
 Upon a marvel in the midst: nay,
 stoop—
 A dullish grey-streaked cumbrous font,
 a group
 Round it, each side of it, where'er
 one sees,
 Upholds it—shrinking Caryatides
 Of just-tinged marble like Eve's liliated
 flesh
 Beneath her Maker's finger when the
 fresh
 First pulse of life shot brightening the
 snow:
 The font's edge burthens every
 shoulder, so
 They muse upon the ground, eyelids
 half closed,
 Some, with meek arms behind their
 backs exposed,
 Some, crested above their bosoms,
 some veil
 Their eyes, some, propping chin and
 ale,
 Some, in slack an utter helpless
 Dead as a married vestal whose whole
 re:
 Goes where the grate above shuts
 dead
 dwell the noiseless girls, patient
 to see
 priests see those of sin impure
 unced for those who resigned
 end
 Having that drunk sweetness to
 the dreg—
 And every eve Sordello's visit begs
 Pardon for them: constant as eve he
 came
 To sit beside each in her turn, the
 same
 As one of them, a certain space: and
 awe
 Made a great indistinctness till he saw
 Sunset slant cheerful through the
 buttress chinks,
 Gold seven times globed; surely our
 maiden shrinks

And a smile stirs her as if one faint
 grain
 Her load were lightened, one shade
 less the stain
 Obscured her forehead, yet one more
 bead slept
 From off the rosary whereby the
 crypt
 Keeps count of the contritions of its
 charge?
 Then with a step more light, a heart
 more large,
 He may depart, leave her and every one
 To linger out the penance in mute
 stone.
 Ah, but Sordello? 'Tis the tale I mean
 To tell you. In this castle may be
 seen,
 On the hill tops, or underneath the
 vines,
 Or southward by the mound of firs
 and pines
 That shuts out Mantua, still in loneli-
 ness,
 A slender boy in a loose page's dress,
 Sordello: do but look on him awhile
 Watching ('tis autumn) with an earnest
 smile
 The noisy flock of thievish birds at
 work
 Among the yellowing vineyards: see
 him lurk
 ('Tis winter with its sullenest of
 storms,
 Beside that arras-length of brodered
 forms.
 On tiptoe, lifting in both hands a light
 Which makes yon warrior's visage
 flutter bright
 —Ecelo, dismal father of the brood,
 And Ecelin, close to the girl he wooed
 —Auria, and their Child, with all his
 wives
 From Agnes to the Tuscan that sur-
 vives,
 Lady of the castle, Adelaide: his face
 —Look, now he turns away! Your-
 selves shall trace
 (The delicate nostril swerving wide
 and fine,
 A sharp and restless lip, so well com-
 bine

With that calm brow) a soul fit to
receive

Delight at every sense ; you can be-
lieve

Sordello foremost in the regal class
Nature has broadly severed from her
mass

Of men and framed for pleasure as
she frames

Some happy lands that have luxurious
names

For loose fertility ; a footfall there
Suffices to upturn to the warm air
Half-germinating spices, mere decay
Produces richer life, and day by day
New pollen on the lily-petal grows,
And still more labyrinthine buds the
rose.

You recognise at once the finer dress
Of flesh that amply lets in loveliness
At eye and ear, while round the rest
is furled

(As though she would not trust them
with her world)

A veil that shows a sky not near so
blue,

And lets but half the sun look fervid
through :

How can such love like souls on each
full-fraught

Discovery brooding, blind at first to
aught

Beyond its beauty ; till exceeding love
Becomes an aching weight, and, to
remove

A curse that haunts such natures—to
preclude

Their finding out themselves can work
no good

To what they love nor make it very
blest

By their endeavour, they are fain
invest

The lifeless thing with life from their
own soul,

Availing it to purpose, to control,
To dwell distinct and have peculiar joy

And separate interests that may em-
ploy

That beauty fitly, for its proper sake ;
Nor rest they here : fresh births of
beauty wake

Fresh homage ; every grade of love
is past,

With every mode of loveliness ; then
cast

Inferior idols off their borrowed crown
Before a coming glory : up and down
Runs arrowy fire, while earthly forms
combine

To throb the secret forth ; a touch
divine—

And the scaled eyeball owns the
mystic rod :

Visibly through his garden walketh
God.

So fare they—Now revert : one
character

Denotes them through the progress
and the stir ;

A need to blend with each external
charm,

Bury themselves, the whole heart wide
and warm,

In something not themselves ; they
would belong

To what they worship—stronger and
more strong

Thus prodigally fed—that gathers
shape

And feature, soon imprisons past
escape

The votary framed to love and to
submit

Nor ask, as passionate he kneels to it
Whence grew the idol's empery. So
runs

A legend ; Light had birth ere moons
and suns,

Flowing through space a river and
alone,

Till chaos burst and blank the spheres
were strown

Hither and thither, foundering and
blind,

When into each of them rushed Light
—to find

Itself no place, foiled of its radiant
chance.

Let such forego their just inheritance !
For there's a class that eagerly looks,

too,
On beauty, but, unlike the gentler
crew,

Proclaims each new revealment born
a twin

With a distinctest consciousness within
Referring still the quality, now first
Revealed, to their own soul; its in-
stinct nursed

In silence, now remembered better,
shown

More thoroughly, but not the less
their own;

A dream come true; the special exer-
cise

Of any special function that implies
The being fair or good or wise or strong,
Dormant within their nature all
along—

Whose fault? So homage other souls
direct

Without, turns inward; how should
this deject

Thee, soul? they murmur; wherefore
strength be quelled

Because, its trivial accidents withheld,
Organs are missed that clog the world,
inert,

Wanting a will, to quicken and exert,
Like thine—existence cannot satiate,
Cannot surprise: laugh thou at
envious fate,

Who from earth's simplest combina-
tion stamp

With individuality—uncrampt
By living its faint elemental life,
Dost soar to heaven's complexest
essence, rife

With grandeurs, unaffronted to the
last,

Equal to being all.

In truth? Thou hast
Life, then—wilt challenge life for us:
thy race

Is vindicated so, obtains its place
In thy ascent, the first of us; whom we
May follow, to the meanest, finally,
With our more bounded wills?

Ah, but to find
A certain mood enervate such a mind.
Counsel it slumber in the solitude
Thus reached nor, stooping, task for
mankind's good

Its nature just as life and time accord
(Too narrow an area to reward

Emprize—the world's occasion worth-
less since

Not absolutely fitted to evince
Its mastery), or if yet worse befall,
And a desire possess it to put all
That nature forth, forcing our strait-
ened sphere

Contain it; to display completely here
The mastery another life should learn,
Thrusting in time eternity's concern,
So that Sordello. . . Fool, who spied
the mark

Of leprosy upon him, violet dark
Already as he loiters? Born just
now—

With the new century—beside the
glow

And efflorescence out of barbarism;
Witness a Greek or two from the abysm
That stray through Florence-town
with studious air,

Calming the chisel of that Pisan
pair . . .

If Nicolo should carve a Christus yet!
While at Siena is Guidone set,
Forehead on hand; a painful birth
must be

Matured ere San Eufemio's sacristy
Or transept gather fruits of one great
gaze

At the noon-sun: look you! An
orange haze—

The same blue stripe round that—
and, i' the midst,

Thy spectral whiteness, mother-maid,
who didst

Pursue the dizzy painter!

Woe then worth
Any officious babble letting forth
The leprosy confirmed and ruinous
To spirit lodged in a contracted house!
Go back to the beginning rather;
blend

It gently with Sordello's life; the end
Is piteous, you shall see, but much
between

Pleasant enough; meantime some pyx
to screen

The full-grown pest, some lid to shut
upon

The goblin! As they found at
Babylon,

(Colleagues mad Lucius and sage
 Antonine)
 Sacking the city, by Apollo's shrine
 Its pride,—in rummaging the rarities,
 A cabinet; be sure, who made the
 prize
 Opened it greedily; and out there
 curled
 Just such another plague, for half the
 world
 Was stung. Crawl in then, hag, and
 crouch asquat,
 Keeping that blotchy bosom thick in
 spot
 Until your time is ripe! The coffer-
 lid
 Is fastened and the coffer safely hid
 Under the Loxian's choicest gifts of
 gold.
 Who will may hear Sordello's story
 told,
 And how he never could remember
 when
 He dwelt not at Goito; calmly then
 About this secret lodge of Adelaide's
 Guided his youth away: beyond the
 glades
 On the fir-forest's border, and the rim
 Of the low range of mountain, was
 for him
 No other world: but that appeared
 his own
 To wander through at pleasure and
 alone.
 The castle too seemed empty; far
 and wide
 Might he disport unless the northern
 side
 Lay under a mysterious interdict—
 Sight, just enough remembered to
 restrict
 His roaming to the corridors, the vault
 Where those font-bearers expiate their
 fault.
 The maple-chamber, and the little
 nooks
 And nests and breezy parapet that
 looks
 Over the woods to Mantua; there
 he strolled.
 Some foreign women-servants, very
 old,

Tended and crept about him—all his
 clue
 To the world's business and embroiled
 ado
 Distant a dozen hill-tops at the most.
 And first a simple sense of life en-
 grossed
 Sordello in his drowsy Paradise;
 The day's adventures for the day
 suffice—
 Its constant tribute of perceptions
 strange
 With sleep and stir in healthy inter-
 change
 Suffice, and leave him for the next at
 ease
 Like the great palmer-worm that strips
 the trees,
 Eats the life out of every luscious
 plant,
 And when September finds them sere
 or scant
 Puts forth two wondrous winglets,
 alters quite,
 And hies him after unforeseen delight;
 So fed Sordello, not a shard dis-
 heathed;
 As ever round each new discovery
 wreathed
 Luxuriantly the fancies infantine
 His admiration, bent on making fine
 Its novel friend at any risk, would
 fling
 In gay profusion forth: a ficklest
 king
 Confessed those minions! Eager to
 dispense
 So much from his own stock of thought
 and sense
 As might enable each to stand alone
 And serve him for a fellow; with his
 own
 Joining the qualities that just before
 Had graced some older favourite: so
 they wore
 A fluctuating halo, yesterday
 Set flicker and to-morrow filched
 away;
 Those upland objects each of separate
 name,
 Each with an aspect never twice the
 same.

Waxing and waning as the new-born
 host
 Of fancies, like a single night's hoar-
 frost
 Gave to familiar things a face gro-
 tesque;
 Only, preserving through the mad
 burlesque
 A grave regard: conceive; the orpine
 patch
 Blossoming earliest on the log house-
 thatch
 The day those archers wound along
 the vines—
 Related to the Chief that left their
 lines
 To climb with clinking step the
 northern stair
 Up to the solitary chambers where
 Sordello never came. Thus thrall
 reached thrall;
 He o'er-festooning every interval
 As the adventurous spider, making
 light
 Of distance, shoots her threads from
 depth to height,
 From barbican to battlement; so
 flung
 Fantasies forth and in their centre
 swung
 Our architect: the breezy morning
 fresh
 Above, and merry; all his waving
 mesh
 Laughing with lucid dew-drops rain-
 bow-edged.
 This world of ours by tacit pact is
 pledged
 To laying such a spangled fabric low
 Whether by gradual brush or gallant
 blow:
 But its abundant will was balked
 here: doubt
 Rose tardily in one so fenced about
 From most that nurtures judgment,
 care and pain:
 Judgment, that dull expedient we
 are fain,
 Less favoured, to adopt betimes and
 force
 Stead us, diverted from our natural
 course

Of joys, contrive some yet amid the
 dearth,
 Vary and render them, it may be,
 worth
 Most we forego: suppose Sordello
 hence
 Selfish enough, without a moral sense
 However feeble; what informed the
 boy
 Others desired a portion in his joy?
 Or say a ruthless chance broke woof
 and warp
 A heron's nest beat down by March
 winds sharp,
 A fawn breathless beneath the pre-
 cipice,
 A bird with unsoiled breast and
 filmless eyes
 Warm in the brake—could these unde-
 the trance
 Lapping Sordello? Not a circum-
 stance
 That makes for you, friend Naddo!
 Eat fern-seed
 And peer beside us and report indeed
 If (your word) Genius dawned with
 throes and stings
 And the whole fiery catalogue, while
 springs
 Summers and winters quietly came
 and went,
 Putting at length that period to content
 By right the world should have im-
 posed: bereft
 Of its good offices, Sordello, left
 To study his companions, managed rip
 Their fringe off, learn the true rela-
 tionship,
 Core with its crust, their natures with
 his own:
 Amid his wild-wood sights he lived
 alone:
 As if the poppy felt with him! Though
 he
 Partook the poppy's red effrontery
 Till Autumn spoils their fleering quit
 with rain,
 And, turbanless, a coarse brown rat-
 tling crane
 Protrudes: that's gone! yet why re-
 lounce, for that,
 His disenchanting tributaries—flat

Perhaps, but scarce so utterly for-
lorn
Their simple presence may not well
be borne
Whose parley was a transport once :
recall
The poppy's gifts, it flaunts you, after
all,
A poppy : why distrust the evidence
Of each soon satisfied and healthy
sense ?
The new-born Judgment answered,
little boots
Beholding other creatures' attributes
And having none : or say that it suf-
ficed,
Yet, could one but possess, oneself
(enticed
Judgment) some special office ! Nought
beside
Serves you ? Well, then, be some-
how justified
For this ignoble wish to circumscribe
And concentrate, rather than swell,
the tribe
Of actual pleasures : what now from
without
Effects it ?—proves, despite a lurking
doubt,
Were sympathy sufficient, trouble
spared ;
He tasted joys by proxy, clearly fared
The better for them ? thus much
craved his soul.
Alas, from the beginning Love is
whole
And true ; if sure of nought beside,
most sure
Of its own truth at least ; nor may
endure
A crowd to see its face, that cannot
know
How hot the pulses throb its heart
below ;
While its own helplessness and utter
want
Of means to worthily be ministrant
To what it worships, do but fan the
more
Its flame, exalt the idol far before
Itself as it would have it ever be ;
Souls like Sordello, on the contrary,

Coerced and put to shame, retaining
Will,
Care little, take mysterious comforts
still,
But look forth tremblingly to ascertain
If others judge their claims not urged
in vain
—Will say for them their stifled
thoughts aloud ;
So they must ever live before a crowd :
Vanity, Naddo tells you.
Whence contrive
A crowd, now ? These brave women
just alive,
That archer-troop ? Forth glided—
not alone
Each painted warrior, every girl of
stone,
Nor Adelaide bent double o'er a
scroll,
One maiden at her knees, that eve
his soul
Shook as he stumbled through the
arras'd glooms
On them, for, 'mid quaint robes and
weird perfumes,
Started the meagre Tuscan up (her
eyes,
The maiden's also, bluer with sur-
prise)
—But the entire out-world : whatever
scraps
And snatches, song and story, dreams
perhaps,
Conceited the world's offices, and he
Transferred to the first-comer, flower
or tree,
Not counted a befitting heritage
Each, of its own right, singly to
engage
Some Man, no other ; such availed to
stand
Alone : strength, wisdom, grace on
every hand
Soon disengaged themselves ; and he
discerned
A sort of human life : at least, was
turned
A stream of life-like figures through
his brain
Lord, Liegeman, Valvassor and Suz-
erain,



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Ere he could choose, surrounded him ;
 a stuff
 To work his pleasure on ; there, sure
 enough,
 But as for gazing, what shall fix that
 gaze ?
 Are they to simply testify the ways
 He who convoked them sends his
 soul along
 With the cloud's thunder or a dove's
 brood-song ?
 While they live each his life, boast
 each his own
 Peculiar dower of bliss, stand each
 alone
 In some one point where something
 dearest loved
 Is easiest gained—far worthier to be
 proved
 Than aught he envies in the forest-
 wights !
 No simple and self-evident delights,
 But mixed desires of unimagined
 range.
 Contrasts or combinations, new and
 strange,
 Irsome perhaps, yet plainly recog-
 nised
 By this, the sudden company—loves
 prized
 By those who are to prize his own
 amount
 Of loves. Once care because such
 make account,
 Allow a foreign recognition stamp
 The current value, and your crowd
 shall vamp
 You counterfeits enough ; and so their
 print
 Be on the piece, 'tis gold, attests the
 mint
 And good, pronounce they whom my
 new appeal
 Is made to : if their casual print con-
 ceal—
 This arbitrary good of theirs o'ergloss
 What I have lived without, nor felt
 my loss—
 Qualities strange, ungainly, wear-
 some,
 —What matter ? so must speech ex-
 pand the dumb

Part sigh, part smile with which
 Sordello, late
 No foolish woodland-sights could
 satiate.
 Betakes himself to study hungrily
 Just what the puppets his crude fantasy
 Supposes notablest, popes, kings,
 priests, knights,
 May please to promulgate for appe-
 tites :
 Accepting all their artificial joys
 Not as he views them, but as he
 employs
 Each shape to estimate the other's
 stock
 Of attributes, that on a marshalled
 flock
 Of authorised enjoyments he may
 spend
 Himself, be Men, now, as he used to
 blend
 With tree and flower—nay more en-
 tirely, else
 'Twere mockery : for instance, how
 excels
 My life that Chieftain's ? (who ap-
 prised the youth
 Ecelin, here, becomes this month in
 truth,
 Imperial Vicar ?) Turns he in his
 tent
 Remissly ? Be it so—my head is bent
 Deliciously amid my girls to sleep :
 What if he stalks the Trentine-pass ?
 Yon steep
 I climbed an hour ago with little toil—
 We are alike there : but can I, too,
 foil
 The Guelfs' paid stabber, carelessly
 afford
 St. Mark's a spectacle, the sleight o'
 the sword
 Baffling their project in a moment ?
 Here
 No rescue ! Poppy he is none, but
 peer
 To Ecelin, assuredly : his hand,
 Fashioned no otherwise, should wield
 a brand
 With Ecelin's success—try, now !
 He soon
 Was satisfied, returned as to the moon

From earth ; left each abortive boy's-
 attempt
 For feats, from failure happily exempt,
 In fancy at his beck. One day I will
 Accomplish it ! Are they not older
 still
 Not grown up men and women ?
 'Tis beside
 Only a dream ; and though I must
 abide
 With dreams now, I may find a
 thorough vent
 For all myself, acquire an instrument
 For acting what these people act ; my
 soul
 Flouting a body out, obtain its whole
 Desire some day ! How else ex-
 press chagrin
 And resignation, show the hope steal
 in
 With which he let sink from an aching
 wrist
 The rough-hewn ash-bow, and a gold
 shaft hiss'd
 Into the Syrian air, struck Malek
 down
 Superbly ! Crosses to the breach !
 God's Town
 Is gained Him back ! Why bend
 rough ash-bows more ?
 So lives he : if not careless as
 before,
 Comforted : for one may anticipate,
 Rehearse the future ; be prepared
 when fate
 Shall have prepared in turn real men
 whose names
 Startle, real places of enormous fames,
 Estes abroad and Ecelins at home
 To worship him, Mantuas, Veronas,
 Rome
 To witness it. Who grudges time so
 spent ?
 Rather test qualities to heart's con-
 tent—
 Summon them, thrice selected, near
 and far—
 Compress the starriest into one star,
 So grasp the whole at once ! The
 pageant's thinned
 Accordingly ; from rank to rank, like
 wind

His spirit passed to winnow and
 divide ;
 Back fell the simpler phantasms ;
 every side
 The strong clave to the wise ; with
 either classed
 The beauteous ; so, till two or three
 amassed
 Mankind's beseeemingnesses, and re-
 duced
 Themselves eventually, graces loosed,
 And lavished strengths, to heighten
 up One Shape
 Whose potency no creature should
 escape :
 Can it be Friedrich of the bowmen's
 talk ?
 Surely that grape-juice, bubbling at
 the stalk,
 Is some grey scorching Saracenic
 wine
 The Kaiser quaffs with the Miramo-
 line—
 Those swarthy hazel-clusters, seamed
 and chapped,
 Or filberts russet-sheathed and velvet-
 capped,
 Are dates plucked from the bough
 John Brienne sent
 To keep in mind his sluggish arma-
 ment
 Of Canaan . . . Friedrich's, all the
 pomp and fierce
 Demeanour ! But harsh sounds and
 sights transpierce
 So rarely the serene cloud where he
 dwells
 Whose looks enjoin, whose lightest
 words are spells
 Upon the obdurate ; that arm indeed
 Has thunder for its slave ; but where's
 the need
 Of thunder if the stricken multitude
 Harkens, arrested in its angriest
 mood,
 While songs go up exulting, then
 dispread,
 Dispart, disperse, lingering overhead
 Like an escape of angels ? 'Tis the
 tune,
 Nor much unlike the words the
 women croon

Smilingly, colourless and faint de-
signed
Each, as a worn-out queen's face some
remind
Of her extreme youth's love-tales.
Eglamor
Made that! Half minstrel and half
emperor,
Who but ill objects vexed him? Such
he slew.
The kinder sort were easy to subdue
By those ambrosial glances, dulcet
tones;
And these a gracious hand advanced
to thrones
Beneath him. Wherefore twist and
torture this,
Striving to name afresh the antique
bliss,
Instead of saying, neither less nor
more,
He had discovered, as our world
before,
Apollo? That shall be the name;
nor bid
Me rag by rag expose how patchwork
hid
The man—what thefts of every clime
and day
Contributed to purfle the array
He climbed with (June's at deep)
some close ravine
'Mid clatter of its million pebbles
sheen,
Over which singing soft the runnel
slipt
Elate with rains: into whose streamlet
dipt
He foot, yet trod, you thought, with
unwet sock—
Though really on the stubs of living
rock
Ages ago it crenneled; vines for roof,
Lindens for wall; before him, aye
aloof,
Flittered in the cool some azure
damsel-fly,
Child of the simmering quiet, there to
die:
Emerging whence, Apollo still, he
spied
Mighty descents of forest; multiplied

Tuft on tuft, here, the frolic myrtle-trees;
There gendered the grave maple-
stocks at ease;
And, proud of its observer, strait the
wood
Tried old surprises on him; black it
stood
A sudden barrier ('twas a cloud
passed o'er)
So dead and dense the tiniest brute
no more
Must pass; yet presently (the cloud
despatched)
Each clump, forsooth, was glistening
detached
A shrub, oak-boles shrunk into ilex-
stems!
Yet could not he denounce the strata-
gems
He saw thro', till, hours thence, aloft
would hang
White summer-lightnings; as it sank
and sprang
In measure, that whole palpitating
breast
Of Heaven, 'twas Apollo nature prest
At eve to worship.
Time stole: by degrees
The Pythons perished off; his votaries
Sink to respectful distance; songs
redeem
Their pains, but briefer; their dis-
missals seem
Emphatic; only girls are very slow
To disappear—his Delians! Some
that glow
O' the instant, more with earlier loves
to wrench
Away, reserves to quell, disdains to
quench;
Alike in one material circumstance—
All soon or late adore Apollo! Glance
The bevy through, divine Apollo's
choice,
A Daphne! We secure Count Rich-
ard's voice
In Este's counsels, one for Este's ends
As our Taurello, say his faded friends.
By granting him our Palma! The
sole child,
They mean, of Agnes Este who be-
guiled

Ecelin, years before this Adelaide
 Wedded and turned him wicked; but
 the maid
 Rejects his suit, those sleepy women
 boast.
 's'e, scornful all beside, deserves the
 most
 Sordello: so conspicuous in his world
 Of dreams sate Palma. How the
 tresses curled
 Into a sumptuous swell of gold and
 wound
 About her like a glory, even the
 ground
 As bright as with shed sunbeams;
 (breathe not, breathe
 Not) —poised, see, one leg doubled
 underneath,
 His small foot buried in the dimpling
 snow.
 Rests, but the other, listlessly below,
 O'er the couch-side swings feeling for
 cool air.
 The vein-streaks swollen a richer
 violet where
 The languid blood lies heavily; and
 calm
 On her slight prop, each flat and out-
 spread palm,
 As but suspended in the act to rise
 By consciousness of beauty, whence
 her eyes
 Turn with so frank a triumph, for she
 meets
 Apollo's gaze in the pine-glooms.
 Time fleets
 That's worst! Because the pre-ap-
 pointed age
 Approaches. Fate is tardy with the
 stage
 She all but promised. Lean he grows
 and pale,
 Though restlessly at rest. Hardly
 avail
 Fancies to soothe him. Time steals,
 yet alone
 He tarries here! The earnest smile
 is gone.
 How long this might continue matters
 not:
 For ever, possibly; since to the
 spot

None come: our lingering Taurello
 quits
 Mantua at last, and light our lady
 flits
 Back to her place disburthened of a
 care.
 Strange—to be constant here if he is
 there!
 Is it distrust? Oh, never! for they
 both
 Goad Ecelin alike—Romano's growth
 So daily manifest that Azzo's dumb
 And Richard wavers . . . let but
 Friedrich come!
 Find matter for the minstrelsy's
 report
 Lured from the Isle and its young
 Kaiser's court
 To sing us a Messina morning up;
 Who, double rillets of a drinking
 cup,
 Sparkle along to ease the land of
 drouth,
 Northward to Provence that, and thus
 far south
 The other: what a method to ap-
 prise
 Neighbours of births, espousals, obse-
 quies!
 Which in their very tongue the
 Troubadour
 Records; and his performance makes
 a tour,
 For Trouveres bear the miracle about,
 Explain its cunning to the vulgar
 rout,
 Until the Formidable House is famed
 Over the country—as Taurello aimed
 Who introduced, although the rest
 adopt,
 The novelty. Such games her absence
 stopped
 Begin afresh now Adelaide, recluse
 No longer, in the light of day pur-
 sues
 Her plans at Mantua—whence an
 accident
 That, breaking on Sordello's mixed
 content
 Opened, like any flash that cures the
 blind,
 The veritable business of mankind.

BOOK THE SECOND

THE woods were long austere with
 snow : at last
 Pink leaflets budded on the beech,
 and fast
 Larches, scattered through pine-tree
 solitudes.
 Brightened, "as in the slumbrous
 heart o' the woods
 Our buried year, a witch, grew young
 again
 To placid incantations, and that stain
 About were from her caldron, green
 smoke blent
 With those black pines" - so Eglamor
 gave vent
 To a chance fancy : whence a just
 rebuke
 From his companion ; brother Naddo
 shook
 The solemnest of brows : Beware, he
 said,
 Of setting up conceits in Nature's stead !
 Forth wandered our Sordello. Nought
 so sure
 As that to-day's adventure will secure
 Palma, the forest-lady—only pass
 O'er yon dark mound and its exhausted
 grass,
 Under that brake where sundawn
 feeds the stalks
 Of withered fern with gold, into those
 walks
 Of pines and take her ! Buoyantly
 he went.
 Again his stooping forehead was be-
 sprent
 With dew-drops from the skirting
 ferns. Then wide
 Opened the great morass, shot every
 side
 With flashing water through and
 through ; a-shine,
 Thick steaming, all alive. Whose
 shape divine
 Quivered i' the farthest rainbow-
 vapour, glanced
 Athwart the flying herons ? He
 advanced,

But warily ; though Mincio leaped no
 more,
 Each foot-fall burst up in the marish-
 floor
 A diamond jet : and if you stooped to
 pick
 Rose-lichen, or molest the leeches
 quick,
 And circling blood-worms, minnow,
 newt or loach,
 A sudden pond would silently en-
 croach
 This way and that. On Palma passed.
 The verge
 Of a new wood was gained. She will
 emerge
 Flushed, now, and panting ; crowds
 to see ; will own
 She loves him—Boniface to hear, to
 groan,
 To leave his suit ! One screen of pine-
 trees still
 Opposes : but—the startling spec-
 tacle—
 Mantua, this time ! Under the walls
 —a crowd
 Indeed—real men and women—gay
 and loud
 Round a pavilion. How he stood !
 In truth
 No prophecy had come to pass : his
 youth
 In its prime now—and where was
 homage poured
 Upon Sordello ?—born to be adored,
 And suddenly discovered weak, scarce
 made
 To cope with any, cast into the shade
 By this and this. Yet something
 seemed to prick
 And tingle in his blood ; a sleight—
 a trick—
 And much would be explained. It
 went for nought—
 The best of their endowments were
 ill bought
 With his identity : nay, the conceit
 This present roving leads to Palma's
 feet
 Was not so vain . . . list ! The
 word, Palma ? Steal
 Aside, and die, Sordello ; this is real,

And this—abjure !

What next ? The curtains, see,
Dividing ! She is there ; and pre-
sently

He will be there—the proper You, at
length—

In your own cherished dress of grace
and strength :

Most like the very Boniface . . .

Not so.

It was a showy man advanced ; but
though

A glad cry welcomed him, then every
sound

Sank and the crowd disposed them-
selves around,

—This is not he, Sordello felt ; while

“ Place

For the best Troubadour of Boniface,”

Hollaed the Jongleurs, “ Eglamor
whose lay

Concludes his patron's Court of Love
to-day.”

Obsequious Naddo strung his master's
lute

With the new lute-string, Elys, named
to suit

The song. He stealthily at watch,
the while,

Biting his lip to keep down a great
smile

Of pride : then up he struck. Sor-
dello's brain

Swam ; for he knew a sometime deed
again ;

So could supply each foolish gap and
chasm

The minstrel left in his enthusiasm.

Mistaking its true version—was the
tale

Not of Apollo ? Only, what avail

Luring her down, that Elys an he
pleased,

If the man dares no further ? Has he
ceased ?

And, lo, the people's frank applause
half done,

Sordello was beside him, had begun

Spite of indignant twitchings from
his friend

The Trouvere) the true lay with the
true end,

Taking the other's names and time
and place

For his. On flew the song, a giddy
race,

After the flying story ; word made
leap

Out word ; rhyme—rhyme ; the lay
could barely keep

Pace with the action visibly rushing
past :

Both ended. Back fell Naddo more
aghast

Than your Egyptian from the harassed
bull

That wheels abrupt and, bellowing,
fronts full

His plague, who spies a scarab 'neath
his tongue,

And found 'twas Apis' flank his hasty
prong

Insulted. But the people—but the
cries,

The crowding round, and proffering
the prize !

(For he had gained some prize)—He
seemed to shrink

Into a sleepy cloud, just at whose
brink

One sight withheld him ; there sat
Adelaide,

Silent ; but at her knees the very
maid

Of the North Chamber, her red lips
as rich,

The same pure fleecy hair ; one curl
of which,

Golden and great, quite touched his
cheek as o'er

She leant, speaking some six words
and no more ;

He answered something. anything ;
and she

Unbound a scarf and laid it
heavily

Upon him, her neck's warmth and
all ; again

Moved the arrested magic ; in his
brain

Noises grew, and a light that turned
to glare,

And greater glare, until the intense
flare

Engulfed him, shut the whole scene
 from his sense,
 And when he woke 'twas many a
 furlong thence,
 At home: the sun shining his ruddy
 wont;
 The customary birds'-chirp; but his
 front
 Was crowned—was crowned! Her
 scented scarf around
 His neck! Whose gorgeous vesture
 heaps the ground?
 A prize? He turned, and peeringly
 on him
 Brooded the women faces, kind and
 dim,
 Ready to talk. The Jongleurs in a
 troop
 Had brought him back, Naddo and
 Squarcialupe
 And Tagliafer; how strange! a child-
 hood spent
 Assuming, well for him, so brave a
 bent!
 Since Eglamor, they heard, was dead
 with spite,
 And Palma chose him for her minstrel.
 Light
 Sordello rose—to think, now; hither-
 to
 He had perceived. Sure a discovery
 grew
 Out of it all! Best live from first to last
 The transport o'er again. A week he
 passed
 Sucking the sweet out of each circum-
 stance,
 From the bard's outbreak to the
 luscious trance
 Bounding his own achievement.
 Strange! A man
 Recounted that adventure, and began
 Imperfectly; his own task was to fill
 The frame-work up, sing well what
 he sung ill,
 Supply the necessary points, set loose
 As many incidents of little use
 —More imbecile the other, not to see
 Their relative importance clear as he!
 But for a special pleasure in the act
 Of singing—had he ever turned, in
 fact,

From Elys, to sing Elys?—from each
 fit
 Of rapture, to contrive a song of it?
 True, this snatch or the other seemed
 to wind
 Into a treasure, helped himself to find
 A beauty in himself; for, see, he
 soared
 By means of that mere snatch to many
 a hoard
 Of fancies; as some falling cone
 bears off
 The eye along the fir-tree-spire, aloft
 To a dove's nest. Then how divine
 the cause
 Such a performance should exact
 applause
 From men if they have fancies too?
 Can Fate
 Decree they find a beauty separate
 In the poor snatch itself . . . our
 Elys, there,
 ("Her head that's sharp and perfect
 like a pear,
 So close and smooth are laid the few
 fine locks
 Coloured like honey oozed from top-
 most rocks
 Sun-blanced the livelong summer",
 —if they heard
 Just those two rhymes, assented at
 my word,
 And loved them as I love them who
 have run
 These fingers through those fine locks,
 let the sun
 Into the white cool skin . . . nay,
 thus I clutch
 Those locks!—I needs must be a
 God to such.
 Or if some few, above themselves,
 and yet
 Beneath me, like their Eglamor, have
 set
 An impress on our gift? So men
 believe
 And worship what they know not,
 nor receive
 Delight from. Have they fancies—
 slow, perchance,
 Not at their beck, which indistinctly
 glance

Until by song each floating part be
linked
To each, and all grow palpable,
distinct?
He pondered this.
Meanwhile sounds low and drear
Stole on him, and a noise of foot-
steps, near
And nearer, and the underwood was
pushed
Aside, the larches grazed, the dead
leaves crushed
At the approach of men. The wind
seemed laid;
Only, the trees shrunk slightly and a
shade
Came o'er the sky although 'twas
midday yet:
You saw each half-shut downcast violet
Flutter—a Roman bride, when they
dispart
Her unbound tresses with the Sabine
dart,
Holding that famous rape in memory
still,
Felt creep into her curls the iron chill,
And looked thus, Eglamor would say
—indeed
'Tis Eglamor, no other, these precede
Home hither in the woods. 'Twere
surely sweet
Far from the scene of one's forlorn
defeat
To sleep! thought Naddo, who in
person led
Jongleurs and Trouveres, chanting at
their head.
A scanty company; for, sooth to say,
Our beaten Troubadour had seen his
day:
Old worshippers were something
shamed, old friends
Nigh weary; still the death proposed
amends:
Let us but get them safely through
my song
And home again, quoth Naddo.
All along,
This man (they rest the bier upon the
sand)
—This calm corpse with the loose
flowers in its hand,

Eglamor, lived Sordello's opposite:
For him indeed was Naddo's notion
right
And Verse a temple-worship vague
and vast,
A ceremony that withdrew the last
Opposing bolt, looped back the
lingering veil
Which hid the holy place—should one
so frail
Stand there without such effort? or
repine
That much was blank, uncertain at
the shrine
He knelt before, till, soothed by many
a rite,
The Power responded, and some
sound or sight
Grew up, his own forever! to be fixed
In rhyme, the beautiful, forever;
mixed
With his own life, unloosed when he
should please,
Having it safe at hand, ready to ease
All pain, remove all trouble; every
time
He loosed that fancy from its bonds
of rhyme,
Like Perseus when he loosed his
naked love,
Faltering; so distinct and far above
Himself, these fancies! He, no
genius rare,
Transfiguring in fire or wave or air
At will, but a poor gnome that,
cloistered up,
In some rock-chamber with his agate
cup,
His topaz rod, his seed-pearl, in
these few
And their arrangement finds enough
to do
For his best art. Then, how he loved
that art!
The calling marking him a man apart
From men—one not to care, take
counsel for
Cold hearts, comfortless faces (Eglamor
Was neediest of his tribe) since verse,
the gift,
Was his, and men, the whole of them,
must shift

Without it, e'en content themselves
 with wealth
 And pomp and power, snatching a
 life by stealth.
 So Eglamor was not without his pride !
 The sorriest bat which cowers through
 noontide
 While other birds are jocund, has one
 time
 When moon and stars are blinded,
 and the prime
 Of earth is its to claim, nor find a peer ;
 And Eglamor was noblest poet here,
 He knew, among the April woods he
 cast
 Conceits upon in plenty as he past,
 That Naddo might suppose him not
 to think
 Entirely on the coming triumph ;
 wink
 At the one weakness ! 'Twas a fervid
 child
 That song of his—no brother of the
 guild
 Had e'er conceived its like. The
 rest you know ;
 The exaltation and the overthrow ;
 Our poet lost his purpose, lost his
 rank,
 His life—to that it came. Yet envy
 sank
 Within him, as he heard Sordello out,
 And, for the first time, shouted—tried
 to shout
 Like others, not from any zeal to show
 Pleasure that way : the common sort
 did so.
 And what was Eglamor ? who, bend-
 ing down
 The same, placed his beneath Sor-
 dello's crown,
 Press'd a kiss on his successor's hand,
 Left one great tear on it, then joined
 his hand
 -In time ; for some were watching
 at the door—
 Who knows what envy may effect ?
 Give o'er,
 Nor charm his lips, nor craze him !
 (here one spied
 And disengaged the withered crown)
 —Beside

His crown ? How prompt and clear
 those verses rung
 To answer yours ! nay, sing them !
 And he sung
 Them calmly. Home he went :
 friends used to wait
 His coming, anxious to congratulate,
 But, to a man, so quickly runs report,
 Could do no less than leave him, and
 escort
 His rival. That eve, then, bred many
 a thought
 What must his future life be : was he
 brought
 So low, who was so lofty this Spring
 morn ?
 At length he said, Best sleep now
 with my scorn,
 And by to-morrow I devise some
 plain
 Expedient ! So he slept, nor woke
 again.
 They found as much, those friends,
 when they returned
 O'erflowing with the marvels they had
 learned
 About Sordello's paradise, his roves
 Among the hills and valleys, plains
 and groves,
 Wherein, no doubt, this lay was
 roughly cast,
 Polished by slow degrees, completed
 last
 To Eglamor's discomfiture and death.
 Such form the chanter's now, and,
 out of breath,
 They lay the beaten man in his abode,
 Naddo reciting that same luckless ode,
 Doleful to hear : Sordello could ex-
 plore
 By means of it, however, one step
 more
 In joy ; and, mastering the round at
 length,
 Learnt how to live in weakness as in
 strength,
 When from his covert forth he stood,
 addressed
 Eglamor, bade the tender ferns invest,
 Primæval pines o'er canopy his couch,
 And, most of all, his fame—(shall I
 avouch

Eglamor heard it, dead though he
 might look,
 And laughed as from his brow Sor-
 dello took
 The crown, and laid it on his breast,
 and said,
 It was a crown, now, fit for poet's
 head?)
 Continue. Nor the prayer quite
 fruitless fell;
 A plant they have yielding a three-
 leaved bell
 Which whitens at the heart ere noon,
 and ails
 Till evening; evening gives it to her
 gales
 To clear away with such forgotten
 things
 As are an eyesore to the morn: this
 brings
 Him to their mind, and bears his
 very name.
 So much for Eglamor. My own
 month came;
 'Twas a sunrise of blossoming and
 May.
 Beneath a flowering laurel thicket lay
 Sordello; each new sprinkle of white
 stars
 That smell fainter of wine than Massic
 jars
 Dug up at Baiæ, when the south wind
 shed
 The ripest, made him happier; filleted
 And robed the same, only a lute be-
 side
 Lay on the turf. Before him far and
 wide
 The country stretched: Goito slept
 behind
 The castle and its covert which
 confined
 Him with his hopes and fears; so
 fain of old
 To leave the story of his birth un-
 told.
 At intervals, 'spite the fantastic glow
 Of his Apollo-life, a certain low
 And wretched whisper winding
 through the bliss,
 Admonished, no such fortune could
 be his,
 All was quite false and sure to fade
 one day:
 The closelier drew he round him his
 array
 Of brilliance to expel the truth. But
 when
 A reason for his difference from men
 Surprised him at the grave, he took
 no rest
 While aught of that old life, superbly
 drest
 Down to its meanest incident, re-
 mained
 A mystery—alas, they soon explained
 Away Apollo! and the tale amounts
 To this: when at Vicenza both her
 Counts
 Banished the Vivaresi kith and kin,
 Those Maltraversi hung on Ecelin,
 Reviling as he followed; he for spite
 Must fire their quarter, though that
 self-same night
 Among the flames young Ecelin was
 born
 Of Adelaide, there too, and barely
 torn
 From the roused populace hard on
 the rear
 By a poor archer when his chieftain's
 fear
 Was high; into the thick Elcorte
 leapt,
 Saved her, and died; no creature left
 except
 His child to thank. And when the
 full escape
 Was known—how men impaled from
 chine to nape
 Unlucky Prata, all to pieces spurned
 Bishop Pistore's concubines, and
 burned
 Taurello's entire household, flesh and
 fell,
 Missing the sweeter prey—such cour-
 age well
 Might claim reward. The orphan,
 ever since,
 Sordello, had been nurtured by his
 prince
 Within a blind retreat where Adelaide
 (For, once this notable discovery
 made.

The past at every point was under-
 stood)
 Can harbour easily when times are
 rude,
 When Este schemes for Palma
 would retrieve
 That pledge, when Mantua is not fit
 to leave
 Longer unguarded with a vigilant eye,
 Taurello bides there so ambiguously
 (He who can have no motive now to
 moil
 For his own fortunes since their utter
 spoil)
 As it were worth while yet (goes the
 report)
 To disengage himself from us. In
 short,
 Apollo vanished ; a mean youth, just
 named
 His lady's minstrel, was to be pro-
 claimed
 —How shall I phrase it? Monarch
 of the World.
 But, on the morning that array was
 furled
 For ever, and in place of one a slave
 To longings, wild, indeed, but long-
 ings save
 In dreams as wild, suppressed—one
 daring not
 Assume the mastery such dreams
 allot,
 Until a magical equipment, strength
 Grace, wisdom, decked him too,—he
 chose at length
 (Content with unproved wits and fail-
 ing frame)
 In virtue of his simple Will, to claim
 That mastery, no less—to do his best
 With means so limited, and let the
 rest
 Go by,—the seal was set : never again
 Sordello could in his own sight re-
 main
 One of the many, one with hopes and
 cares
 And interests nowise distinct from
 theirs,
 Only peculiar in a thriveless store
 Of fancies, which were fancies and no
 more ;

Never again for him and for the
 crowd
 A common law was challenged and
 allowed
 If calmly reasoned of, howe'er denied
 By a mad impulse nothing justified
 Short of Apollo's presence : the
 divorce
 Is clear : why needs Sordello square
 his course
 By any known example? Men no
 more
 Compete with him than tree and
 flower before ;
 Himself, inactive, yet is greater far
 Than such as act, each stooping to
 his star,
 Acquiring thence his function ; he has
 gained
 The same result with meaner mortals
 trained
 To strength or beauty, moulded to
 express
 Each the idea that rules him ; since
 no less
 He comprehends that function, but
 can still
 Embrace the others, take of Might his
 fill
 With Richard as of Grace with Palma,
 mix
 Their qualities, or for a moment fix
 On one, abiding free meantime, un-
 cramped
 By any partial organ, never stamped
 Strong, so to Strength turning all
 energies—
 Wise, and restricted to becoming
 Wise—
 That is, he loves not, nor possesses
 One
 Idea that, star-like over, lures him on
 To its exclusive purpose. Fortunate
 This flesh of mine ne'er strove to
 emulate
 A soul so various—took no casual
 mould
 Of the first fancy and contracted, cold
 Lay clogged forever thence, averse to
 change
 As that. Whereas it left her free to
 range,

remains itself a blank, cast into shade,
 Numbers little, if it cannot aid.

So range, my soul! Who, by self-
 consciousness,

The last drop of all beauty dost
 express—

The grace of seeing grace, a quint-
 essence

... thee: while for the world, that
 can dispense

Order on men, themselves that
 wonder—make

A lift to love at second hand and
 take

Those for its idols who but idolise.

Themselves,—that loves the soul as
 strong, as wise.

Love love is: Strength, is Wisdom,
 such shall bow

Solely in unexampled worship now,
 Dedicating me!

(Dear monarch, I beseech,
 Notice how lamentably wide a breach

I here! discovering this, discover too
 What our poor world has possibly to do

With it! As pigmy natures as you
 please—

So much the better for you; take your
 ease;

Look on, and laugh; style yourself
 God alone;

Strangle some day with a cross olive-
 stone;

All that is right enough: but why
 want us

To know that you yourself know thus
 and thus?

Not finish—)

Bow to me conceiving all
 Men's life, who see its blisses, great
 and small,

Man—not tasting any; no machine
 To exercise my utmost will is mine,
 Therefore mere consciousness for me!

Perceive
 What I could do, a mastery believe,
 Asserted and established to the throng

By their selected evidence of Song
 Which now shall prove whate'er they

are, or seek

To be, I am—who take no pains to
 speak,

Change no old standardis of perfection,
 vex

With no strange forms created to per-
 plex,

But mean perform their bidding and
 no more.

At their own satiating-point give o'er,
 And each shall love in me the love

that leads

His soul to its perfection. Song, not
 Deeds,

(For we get tired) was chosen. Fate
 would brook

Mankind no other organ; He would
 look

For not another channel to dispense
 His own volition and receive their

sense

Of its existing but would be content,
 Obstructed else, with merely verse for

vent—

Nor should, for instance, Strength an
 outlet seek

And striving be admired, nor Grace
 bespeak

Wonder, displayed in gracious atti-
 tudes,

Nor Wisdom, poured forth, change
 unseemly moods;

But he would give and take on Song's
 one point:

Like some huge throbbing stone that,
 poised a-joint,

Sounds to affect on its basaltic bed
 Must sue in just one accent: tempests

shed

Thunder, and raves the landstorm:
 only let

That key by any little noise be set—
 The far benighted hunter's halloo pitch

On that, the hungry curlew chance to
 scritch

Or serpent hiss it, rustling through
 the rift,

However loud, however low—all lift
 The groaning monster, stricken to the

heart.

Lo ye, the world's concernment, for
 its part,
 And this, for his, will hardly interfere!
 Its businesses in blood and blaze this
 year

—But wile the hour away—a pastime
slight
Till he shall step upon the platform :
right !
And, now thus much is settled, cast
in rough,
Proved feasible, be counselled ! thought
enough,
Slumber, Sordello ! any day will
serve :
Were it a less digested plan ! how
swerve
To-morrow ? Meanwhile eat these
sun-dried grapes
And watch the soaring hawk there !
Life escapes
Merrily thus.

He thoroughly read o'er
His truchman Naddo's missive six
times more,
Praying him visit Mantua and supply
A famished world.

The evening star was high
When he reached Mantua, but his
fame arrived
Before him : friends applauded, foes
connived,
And Naddo looked an angel, and the
rest
Angels, and all these angels would be
blest
Supremely by a song—the thrice-re-
nowned
Goito manufacture. Then he found
(Casting about to satisfy the crowd)
That happy vehicle, so late allowed,
A sore annoyance ; 'twas the song's
effect

He cared for, scarce the song itself :
reflect !

In the past life what might be sing-
ing's use ?

Just to delight his Delians, whose
profuse

Praise, not the toilsome process which
procured

That praise, enticed Apollo : dreams
abjured,

No over-leaping means for ends—take
both

For granted or take neither ! I am
loth

To say the rhymes at last were
Eglamor's ;

But Naddo, chuckling, bade com-
petitors

Go pine ; the Master certes meant to
waste

No effort, cautiously had probed the
taste

He'd please anon : true bard, in short,
disturb

His title if they could ; nor spur nor
curb,

Fancy nor reason, wanting in him ;
whence

The staple of his verses, common
sense :

He built on Man's broad nature—gift
of gifts

That power to build ! The world
contented shifts

With counterfeits enough, a dreary sort
Of warriors, statesmen, ere it can
extort

Its poet-soul—that's, after all, a freak
(The having eyes to see and tongue
to speak)

With our herd's stupid sterling happi-
ness

So plainly incompatible that—yes—
Yes—should a son of his improve the
breed

And turn out poet, he were cursed
indeed.

Well, there's Goito to retire upon
If the worst happen ; best go stoutly on

Now ! thought Sordello.

Ay, and goes on yet !
You pother with your glossaries to
get

A notion of the Troubadour's intent—
His Rondels, Tenzons, Virlai or
Sirvent—

Much as you study arras how to twirl
His Angelot, plaything of page and
girl

Once ; but you surely reach, at last,—
or, no !

Never quite reach what struck the
people so,

As from the welter of their time he
drew

Its elements successively to view,

Followed all actions backward on their
 course
 And catching up, unmingled at the
 source,
 Such a Strength, such a Weakness,
 added then
 A touch or two, and turned them into
 Men.
 Virtue took form, nor Vice refused a
 shape;
 Here Heaven opened, there was Hell
 agape,
 As Saint this simpered past in sanctity,
 Sinner the other flared portentous by
 A greedy People: then why stop,
 surprised
 At his success? The scheme was
 realised
 Too suddenly in one respect: a crowd
 Praising, eyes quick to see, and lips
 as loud
 To speak, delicious homage to receive,
 Bianca's breath to feel upon his sleeve
 Who said, "But Anafest—why asks
 he less
 Than Lucio, in your verses? how
 confess,
 It seemed too much but yestereve!"
 The youth
 Who bade him earnestly "avow the
 truth,
 You love Bianca, surely, from your
 song;
 I knew I was unworthy!" soft or
 strong,
 In poured such tributes ere he had
 arranged
 Etherial ways to take them, sorted,
 changed,
 Digested: courted thus at unawares,
 In spite of his pretensions and his
 cares
 He caught himself shamefully hanker-
 ing
 After your obvious petty joys that
 spring
 From true life, fain relinquish pedestal
 And condescend with pleasures—one
 and all
 To be renounced, no doubt; for thus
 to chain
 Himself to single joys and so refrain

From tasting their quintessence, frus-
 trates, sure.
 His prime design; each joy must he
 abjure
 Even for love of it.
 He laughed: what sage
 But perishes if from his magic page
 He look because, at the first line, a
 proof
 'Twas heard salutes him from the
 cavern roof?
 On! Give thyself, excluding aught
 beside,
 To the day's task; compel thy slave
 provide
 Its utmost at the soonest: turn the
 leaf
 Thoroughly conned; these lays of
 thine, in brief—
 Cannot men bear, now, something
 better?—fly
 A pitch beyond this unreal pageantry
 Of essences? the period sure has
 ceased
 For such: present us with ourselves,
 at least,
 Not portions of ourselves, mere loves
 and hates
 Made flesh: wait not!
 Awhile the poet waits
 However. The first trial was enough:
 He left imagining, to try the stuff
 That held the imaged thing and, let
 it writhe
 Never so fiercely, scarce allowed a
 tithe
 To reach the light—his Language.
 How he sought
 The cause, conceived a cure, and
 slow re-wrought
 That Language, welding words into
 the crude
 Mass from the new speech round him,
 till a rude
 Armour was hammered out, in time
 to be
 Approved beyond the Roman panoply
 Melted to make it, boots not. This
 obtained
 With some ado, no obstacle remained
 To using it; accordingly he took
 An action with its actors, quite forsook

Himself to live in each, returned anon
 With the result— a creature, and by one
 And one proceeded leisurely equip
 Its limbs in harness of his workman-
 ship.

Accomplished! Listen, Mantuans!
 Fond essay!

Piece after piece that armour broke
 away

Because perceptions whole, like that
 he sought

To clothe, reject so pure a work of
 thought

As language: Thought may take Per-
 ception's place

But hardly co-exist in any case,
 Being its mere presentment—of the
 Whole

By Parts, the Simultaneous and the
 Sole

By the Successive and the Many.
 Lacks

The crowd perceptions? painfully it
 tacks

Together thoughts Sordello, needing
 such,

Has rent perception into: it's to clutch
 And reconstruct—his office to diffuse,

Destroy: as difficult obtain a Muse
 In sport, as be Apollo. For the rest,

Even if some wondrous vehicle express
 The whole dream, what impertinence
 in me

So to express it, who myself can be
 The dream! nor, on the other hand,
 are those.

I sing to over-likely to suppose
 A higher than the highest I present
 Now, and they praise already: be
 content

Both parties, rather; they with the
 old verse.

And I with the old praise—far go,
 fare worse!

A few adhering rivets loosed, up-
 springs

The angel, sparkles off his mail, and
 ring-

Whirled from each delicatest limb it
 warps,

As might Apollo from the sudden
 corpse

Of Hyacinth have cast his luckless
 quoits.

He set to celebrating the exploits
 Of Montfort o'er the Mountaineers.

Then came
 The world's revenge: their pleasure
 now his aim

Merely—what was it? Not to play
 the fool

So much as learn our lesson in your
 school,

Replied the world: he found that
 every time

He gained applause by any given
 rhyme

His auditory recognised no jot

As he intended, and mistaking not

Him for his meanest hero, ne'er was
 dunce

Sufficient to believe him—All at once.

His Will . . . conceive it caring for
 his Will!

—Mantuans, the main of them, ad-
 miring still

How a mere singer, ugly, stunted
 weak.

Had Montfort at completely (so to
 speak)

His fingers' ends; while past the
 praise-tide swept

To Montfort, either's share distinctly
 kept,

The true meed for true merit—His
 abates

Into a sort he most repudiates,

And on them angrily he turns. Who
 were

The Mantuans, after all, that he
 should care

About their recognition, ay or no?

In spite of the convention months ago
 (Why blink the truth), was not he

forced to help

This same ungrateful audience, every
 whelp

Of Naddo's litter, make them pass
 for peers

With the bright band of those Goito
 years,

As erst he toiled for flower or tree
 Why there

Sat Palma! Adelaide's funereal hair

Ennobled the next corner. Ay, he
 strewed
 A fairy dust upon that multitude
 Although he feigned to take them by
 themselves;
 His giants dignified those puny elves,
 Sublimed their faint applause. In
 short he found
 Himself still footing a delusive round,
 Remote as ever from the self-display
 He meant to compass, hampered
 every way
 By what he hoped assistance. Where-
 fore then
 Continue, make believe to find in men
 A use he found not?
 Weeks, months, years went by;
 And, lo, Sordello vanished utterly,
 Sundered in twain; each spectral part
 at strife
 With each; one jarred against another
 life;
 The Poet thwarting hopelessly the
 Man
 Who, fooled no longer, free in fancy ran
 Here, there; let slip no opportunities
 Forsooth, as pitiful beside the prize
 To drop on him some no-time and
 acquit
 His constant faith (the Poet-half's to
 wit
 That waiving any compromise be-
 tween
 No joy and all joy kept the hunger
 keen
 Beyond most methods—of incurring
 scoff
 From the Man-portion not to be put off
 With self-reflectings by the Poet's
 scheme
 Though ne'er so bright; which
 sauntered forth in dream,
 Dress'd any how, nor waited mystic
 frames,
 In-measurable gifts, astounding claims,
 But just his sorry self; who yet might
 be
 Sorrier for aught he in reality
 Achieved, so pinioned that the Poet-
 part,
 Fondling, in turn of fancy, Verse; the
 Art

Developing his soul a thousand ways;
 Potent, by its assistance, to amaze
 The multitude with majesties, con-
 vince
 Each sort of nature that same nature's
 prince
 Accosted it: language, the makeshift,
 grew
 Into a bravest of expedients, too;
 Apollo, seemed it now, perverse had
 thrown
 Quiver and bow away, the lyre alone
 Sufficed: while, out of dream, his
 day's work went
 To tune a crazy tenzon or sirvent—
 So hampered him the Man-part, thrust
 to judge
 Between the bard and the bard's
 audience, grudge
 A minute's toil that missed its due
 reward!
 But the complete Sordello, Man and
 Bard,
 John's cloud-girt angel, this foot on
 the land,
 That on the sea, with open in his hand
 A bitter-sweetling of a book—was
 gone.
 And if internal struggles to be one,
 That frittered him incessantly piece-
 meal,
 Referred, ne'er so obliquely, to the
 real
 Mantuans! intruding ever with some
 call
 To action while he pondered, once
 for all,
 Which looked the easier effort—to
 pursue
 This course, still leap o'er paltry joys,
 yearn through
 The present ill-appreciated stage
 Of self-revelment and compel the age
 Know him; or else, forswearing bard-
 craft, wake
 From out his lethargy and nobly shake
 Off timid habits of denial, mix
 With men, enjoy like men: ere he
 could fix
 On aught, in rushed the Mantuans;
 much they cared
 For his perplexity! Thus unprepared,

The obvious if not only shelter lay
 In deeds the dull conventions of his
 day
 Prescribed the like of him : why not
 be glad
 'Tis settled : Ima's minstrel, good or
 bad,
 Submits to this and that established
 rule?
 Let Vidal change or any other fool
 His murrey-coloured robe for philamot
 And crop his hair ; so skin-deep, is
 it not,
 Such vigour? Then, a sorrow to the
 heart,
 His talk! Whatever topics they
 might start
 Had to be groped for in his conscious-
 ness
 Strait, and as strait delivered them by
 guess :
 Only obliged to ask himself, "What
 was,"
 A speedy answer followed, but, alas,
 One of God's large ones, tardy to con-
 dense
 Itself into a period ; answers whence
 A tangle of conclusions must be
 stripp'd
 At any risk ere, trim to pattern clipp'd.
 They matched rare specimens the
 Mantua flock
 Regaled him with, each talker from
 his stock
 Of sorted o'er opinions, every stage,
 Juicy in youth or desiccate with
 age,
 Fruits like the fig-tree's, rathe-ripe,
 rotten-rich,
 Sweet-sour, all tastes to take : a prac-
 tice which
 He too had not impossibly attained.
 Once either of those fancy-flights re-
 strained ;
 For, at conjecture how the words
 appear
 To others, playing there what passes
 here,
 And occupied abroad by what he
 spurned
 At home, 'twas slipt the occasion he
 returned

To seize : he'd strike that lyre adroitly
 —speech,
 Would but a twenty cubic plectre
 reach ;
 A clever hand, consummate instru-
 ment,
 Were both brought close ! each ex-
 cellency went
 For nothing else. The question
 Naddo asked
 Had just a life-time moderately tasked
 To answer, Naddo's fashion ; more
 disgust
 And more ; why move his soul, since
 move it must
 At minute's notice or as good it failed
 To move at all? The end was, he
 retailed
 Some ready-made opinion, put to use
 This quip, that maxim, ventured re-
 produce
 Gestures and tones—at any folly caught
 Serving to finish with, nor too much
 sought
 If false or true 'twas spoken ; praise
 and blame
 Of what he said grew pretty well the
 same
 —Meantime awards to meantime acts :
 his soul,
 Unequal to the compassing a Whole,
 Saw in a tenth part less and less to
 strive
 About. And as for Men in turn . . .
 contrive
 Who could to take eternal interest
 In them, so hate the worst, so love
 the best!
 Though in pursuance of his passive
 plan
 He hailed, decried the proper way.
 As Man
 So figured he ; and how as Poet?
 Verse
 Came only not to a stand-still. The
 worse,
 That his poor piece of daily work to do
 Was not sink under any rivals ; who
 Loudly and long enough, without
 these qualms,
 Tuned, from Bocafoli's stark-naked
 psalms,

To Plara's sonnets spoilt by toying
with,
As knops that stud some almug to
the pith
Prickèd for gum, wry thence, and
crinklèd worse
T' a pursed up eyelids of a river-
horse
Sundaing himself o' the slime when
whirrs the breese
Ha, ha ! Of course he might compete
with these
But—but—
Observe a pompion-twine afloat ;
Pluck me one cup from off the castle-
moat—
Along with cup you raise leaf, stalk
and root,
The entire surface of the pool to boot.
So could I pluck a cup, put in one
song
A single sight, did not my hand, too
strong,
Fwitch in the least the root-strings of
the whole.
How should externals satisfy my soul ?
Why that's precise the error Squarcia-
lupe
Hazarded Naddo) finds ; the man
can't stoop
To sing us out, quoth he, a mere
romance ;
He'd fain do better than the best,
enhance
The subjects' rarity, work problems
out
Therewith : now you're a bard, a bard
past doubt.
And no philosopher ; why introduce
Crotchets like these ? fine, surely, but
no use
In poetry—which still must be, to
strike,
Based upon common sense ; there's
nothing like
Appealing to our nature ! what beside
Was your first poetry ? No tricks
were tried
In that, no hollow thrills, affected
throes !
The man, said we, tells his own joys
and woes—

We'll trust him. Would you have
your songs endure ?
Build on the human heart !—Why to
be sure
Yours is one sort of heart—but I
mean theirs,
Ours, every one's, the healthy heart
one cares
To build on ! Central peace, mother
of strength,
That's father of . . . nay, go yourself
that length,
Ask those calm-hearted doers what
they do
When they have got their calm !
Nay, is it true
Fire rankles at the heart of every
globe ?
Perhaps ! But these are matters one
may probe
Too deeply for poetic purposes :
Rather select a theory that . . . yes
Laugh ! what does that prove ? . . .
stations you midway
And saves some little o'er-refining.
Nay,
That's rank injustice done me ! I
restrict
The poet ? Don't I hold the poet
picked
Out of a host of warriors, statesmen—
did
I tell you ? Very like ! as well you
hid
That sense of power you have ! True
bards believe
Us able to achieve what they achieve—
That is, just nothing—in one point
abide
Profounder simpletons than all beside :
Oh ay ! The knowledge that you are
a bard
Must constitute your prime, nay sole,
reward !
So prattled Naddo, busiest of the
tribe
Of genius-haunters—how shall I de-
scribe
What grubs or nips, or rubs, or rips—
your louse
For love, your flea for hate, mag-
nanimous,

Malignant, Pappacoda, Tagliafer,
 Picking a sustenance from wear and
 tear
 By implements it sedulous employs
 To undertake, lay down, mete out,
 o'er-toise
 Sordello? fifty creepers to elude
 At once! They settled stanchly;
 shame ensued:
 Behold the monarch of mankind suc-
 cumb
 To the last fool who turned him
 round his thumb,
 As Naddo styled it! 'Twas not worth
 oppose
 The matter of a moment, gainsay
 those
 He aimed at getting rid of; better
 think
 Their thoughts and speak their speech,
 secure to slink
 Back expeditiously to his safe place.
 And chew the cud—what he and
 what his race
 Were really, each of them. Yet even
 this
 Conformity was partial. He would
 miss
 Some point, brought into contact with
 them ere
 Assured in what small segment of the
 sphere
 Of his existence they attended him;
 Whence blunders, falsehoods rectify
 —a grim
 List—slur it over! How? If dreams
 were tried,
 His will swayed sicklily from side to
 side
 Not merely neutralized his waking act
 But tended e'en in fancy to distract
 The intermediate will, the choice of
 means:
 He lost the art of dreaming: Mantua
 scenes
 Supplied a baron, say, he sung before.
 Handsomely reckless, full to running
 o'er
 Of gallantries; abjure the soul, con-
 tent
 With body, therefore! Scarcely had
 he bent

Himself in dream thus low when
 matter fast
 Cried out, he found, for spirit to con-
 trast
 And task it duly; by advances slight,
 The simple stuff becoming composite,
 Count Lori grew Apollo—best recall
 His fancy! Then would some rough
 peasant-Paul
 Like those old Ecelin confers with,
 glance
 His gay apparel o'er; that counten-
 ance
 Gathered his shattered fancy into one,
 And, body clean abolished, soul alone
 Sufficed the grey Paulician: by-and-by
 To balance the ethereality
 Passions were needed; foiled he sank
 again.
 Meanwhile the world rejoiced ('tis
 time explain)
 Because a sudden sickness set it free
 From Adelaide. Missing the mother-
 bee
 Her mountain hive Romano swarmed;
 at once
 A rustle forth of daughters and of sons
 Blackened the valley. I am sick too,
 old,
 Half crazed I think; what good's the
 Kaiser's gold
 To such an one? God help me! for
 I catch
 My children's greedy sparkling eyes
 at watch—
 He bears that double breastplate on,
 they say,
 So many minutes less than yesterday!
 Beside Monk Hilary is on his knees
 No, sworn to kneel and pray till
 God shall please
 Exact a punishment for many things
 You know and some you never knew;
 which brings
 To memory, Azzo's sister Beatrix
 And Richard's Giglia are my Alberic's
 And Ecelin's betrothed; the Count
 himself
 Must get my Palma; Ghibellin and
 Guelph
 Meant to embrace each other. So began
 Romano's missive to his fighting-man

Taurello on the Tuscan's death, away
 With Friedrich sworn to sail from
 Naples' bay
 Next month for Syria. Never thunder-
 clap
 Out of Vesuvius' mount like this
 mishap
 Startled him. That accursed Vi-
 cenza! I
 Absent, and she selects this time to
 die!
 Ho, fellows, for Vicenza! Half a
 score
 Of horses ridden dead he stood before
 Romano in his reeking spurs: too
 late—
 Boniface urged me, Este could not
 wait,
 The chieftain stammered; let me die
 in peace—
 Forget me! Was it I e'er craved
 increase
 Of rule? Do you and Friedrich plot
 your worst
 Against the Father: as you found me
 first
 So leave me now. Forgive me!
 Palma, sure,
 Is at Goito still. Retain that lure—
 Only be pacified!

The country rung

With such a piece of news: on every
 tongue
 How Ecelin's great servant, congeal-
 ed off,
 Had done a long day's service, so
 might doff
 The green and yellow to recover
 breath
 At Mantua, whither, since Retrude's
 death,
 (The girlish slip of a Sicilian bride
 From Otho's house he carried to
 reside
 At Mantua till the Ferrarese should
 pile
 A structure worthy her imperial
 style,
 The gardens raise, their tenantry en-
 shrine
 She never lived to see) although his
 line

Was ancient in her archives and she
 took
 A pride in him, that city, nor forsook
 Her child though he forsook himself
 and spent
 A prowess on Romano surely meant
 For his own purposes—he ne'er resorts
 If wholly satisfied (to trust reports)
 With Ecelin. So, forward in a trice
 Were shows to greet him. Take a
 friend's advice,
 Quoth Naddo to Sordello, nor be rash
 Because your rivals (nothing can abash
 Some folks) demur that we pro-
 nounced you best
 To sound the great man's welcome;
 'tis a test,
 Remember; Strojavacca looks askint,
 The rough fat sloven; and there's
 plenty hint
 Your pinions have received of late a
 shock—
 Out-soar them, cobsman of the silver
 flock!
 Sing well! A signal wonder song's
 no whit
 Facilitated.

Fast the minutes flit;

Another day, Sordello finds, will bring
 The soldier, and he cannot choose but
 sing;
 So quits, a last shift, Mantua—slow,
 alone:
 Out of that aching brain, a very stone,
 Song must be struck. What occupies
 that front?
 Just how he was more awkward than
 his wont
 The night before, when Naddo, who
 had seen
 Taurello on his progress, praised the
 mien
 For dignity no crosses could affect—
 Such was a joy, and might not he
 detect
 A satisfaction if established joys.
 Were proved imposture? Poetry
 annoys
 Its utmost: wherefore fret? Verses
 may come
 Or keep away! And thus he
 wandered, dumb

Till evening, when he paused,
thoroughly spent,
On a blind hill-top ; down the gorge
he went,
Yielding himself up as to an embrace ;
The moon came out : like features of
a face
A querulous fraternity of pines,
Sad blackthorn clumps, leafless and
grovelling vines
Also came out, made gradually up
The picture ; 'twas Goito's mountain-
cup
And castle. He had dropped through
one defile
He never dared explore, the Chief
erewhile
Had vanished by. Back rushed the
dream, enwrapt
Him wholly. 'Twas Apollo now
they lapped
Those mountains, not a pettish
minstrel meant
To wear his soul away in discontent
Brooding on fortune's malice : heart
and brain
Swelled ; he expanded to himself again
As that thin seedling spice-tree starved
and frail
Pushing between cat's head or ibis' tail
Crusted into the porphyry pavement
smooth
—Suffered remain just as it sprung to
soothe
The Soldan's pining daughter, never
yet
Well in the chilly green-glazed
minaret—
When rooted up the sunny day she
died
And flung into the common court
beside
Its parent tree. Come home, Sor-
dello ! Soon
Was he low muttering beneath the
moon
Of sorrow saved, of quiet evermore,
How from his purposes maintained
before
Only resulted wailing and hot tears.
Ah, the slim castle ! dwindled of late
years,

But more mysterious ; gone to ruin—
trails
Of vine thro' every loop-hole,
Nought avails
The night as, torch in hand, he must
explore
The maple chamber—did I say its floor
Was made of intersecting cedar
beams ?
Worn now with gaps so large there
blew cold streams
Of air quite from the dungeon ; lay
your ear
Close and 'tis like, one after one, you
hear
In the blind darkness water-drops.
The nests
And nooks retain their long-ranged
vesture-chests
Empty and smelling of the iris-root
The Tuscan grated o'er them to recruit
Her wasted wits. Palma was gone
that day,
Said the remaining women. Last,
he lay
Beside the Carian group reserved and
still.
The Body, the Machine for Acting
Will
Had been at the commencement
proved unfit ;
That for Reflecting, Demonstrating it,
Mankind—no fitter : was the Will
Itself
In fault ?
His forehead pressed the
moonlit shelf
Beside the youngest marble maid
awhile ;
Then, raising it, he thought, with a
long smile,
I shall be king again ! as he withdrew
The envied scarf ; into the font he threw
His crown.
Next day, no poet ! Where-
fore ? asked
Taurello, when the dance of Jongleurs
masked
As devils ended ; don't a song come
next ?
The master of the pageant looked
perplex

Till Naddo's whisper came to his relief:
 His Highness knew what poets were: in brief,
 Had not the tetchy race prescriptive right
 To peevishness, caprice? or, call it spite,
 One must receive their nature in its length
 And breadth, expect the weakness with the strength!
 So phrasing, till, his stock of phrases spent,
 The easy-natured soldier smiled assent,
 Settled his portly person, smoothed his chin,
 And nodded that the bull-chase might begin.

BOOK THE THIRD

And the font took them: let our laurels lie!
 Braid moonfern now with mystic trifoly
 Because once more Goito gets, once more,
 Sordello to itself! A dream is o'er
 And the suspended life begins anew;
 Quiet those throbbing temples, then, subdue
 That cheek's distortion! Nature's strict embrace,
 Putting aside the past, shall soon efface
 Its print as well—factitious humours grown
 For the true—loves, hatreds not his own—
 And turn him pure as some forgotten vest
 Woven of painted byssus, silkiest
 Lusting the Tyrrhene wheelk's pearl-sheeted lip,
 Left welter where a trireme let it slip
 In the sea and vexed a Satrap; so the stain
 Of the world forsakes Sordello with its pain

Its pleasure: how the tinct loosening escapes
 Cloud after cloud! Mantua's familiar shapes
 Die, fair and foul die, fading as they flit,
 Men, women, and the pathos and the wit,
 Wise speech and foolish, deeds to smile or sigh
 For, good, bad, seemly or ignoble, die:
 The last face glances through the eglantines,
 The last voice murmurs 'twixt the blossomed vines
 This May of the Machine supplied by Thought
 To compass Self-perception idly sought
 By forcing half himself—an insane pulse
 Of a God's blood on clay it could convulse
 Never transmute—on human sights and sounds
 To watch the other half with; irk—some bounds
 It ebbs from to its source, a fountain sealed
 Forever. Better sure be unrevealed
 Than part revealed: Sordello well or ill
 Is finished with: what further use of Will
 —Point in the prime idea not realised,
 An oversight, inordinately prized
 No less, and pampered with enough of each
 Delight to prove the whole above its reach.
 To need become all natures yet retain
 The law of one's own nature—to remain
 Oneself, yet yearn . . . aha, that chestnut, think,
 To yearn for this first larch-bloom crisp and pink,
 With those pale fragrant tears where zephyrs staunch
 March wounds along the fretted pine-tree branch!

Will and the means to show will,
great and small

Material, spiritual, abjure them all
 Save any so distinct as to be left
 Amuse, not tempt become : and, thus
 bereft,

Say, Just as I am fashioned would I be!
 Nor, Moon, is it Apollo now but me
 Thou visitest to comfort and befriend ;
 Swim thou into my heart and there an
 end

Since I possess thee ! nay, thus shut
 mine eyes

And know, quite know, by that heart's
 fall and rise

If thou dost bury thee in clouds and
 when

Out-standest : wherefore practise upon
 Men

To make that plainer to myself?

Slide here

Over a sweet and solitary year
 Wasted : or simply notice change in
 him—

How eyes, bright with exploring once,
 grew dim

And satiate with receiving. Some
 distress

Occasioned, too, a sort of conscious-
 ness

Under the imbecility ; nought kept
 That down : he slept, but was aware
 he slept

And frustrate so : as who brainsick
 made pact

Erst with the overhanging cataract
 To deafen him, yet may distinguish
 now

His own blood's measured clicking at
 his brow.

To finish. One declining Autumn
 day—

Few birds about the heaven chill
 and grey,

No wind that cared trouble the tacit
 woods—

He sauntered home complacently,
 their moods

According, his and Nature's. Every
 spark

Of Mantua life was trodden out ; so
 dark

The embers that the Troubadour who
 sung

Hundreds of songs forgot, its trial
 the tongue,

Its craft the brain, how either brought
 to pass

Singing so e'er ; that faculty might
 elude

With any of Apollo's now. The year
 Began to find its early promise sere

As well. Thus beauty vanishes !
 Your stone

Outlasts your flesh. Nature's and
 his youth gone,

They left the world to you and wished
 you joy.

When stopping his benevolent employ
 A presage shuddered through the
 welkin ; harsh

The earth's remonstrance followed.
 'Twas the marsh

Gone of a sudden. Mincio in its
 place

Laughed a broad water in next morn-
 ing's face

And, where the mists broke up in
 mense and white

I' the steady wind, burned like a spilt
 of light

Out of the crashing of a myriad star-
 And here was Nature, bound by the
 same bars

Of fate with him !

No : youth once gone is gone
 Deeds let escape are never to be
 done :

Leaf-fall and grass-spring for the year
 but us—

Oh forfeit I unalterably thus
 My chance? nor two lives wait me
 this to spend

Learning save that? Nature has
 leisure mend

Mistake, occasion, knows she will
 recur—

Landslip or seabreach how affects
 her

With her magnificent resources? I
 Must perish once and perish utterly

Not any strollings now at even close
 Down the field-path, Sordello, in
 thorn-rows

Alive with lamp-flies, swimming spots
 of fire
 And dew, outlining the black cypress'
 spire
 She waits you at, Elys, who heard you
 first
 Woo her the snow-month—ah, but
 ere she durst
 Answer 'twas April! Linden-flower-
 time-long
 Her eyes were on the ground; 'tis
 July, strong
 Now; and because white dust-clouds
 overwhelm
 The woodside, here or by the village elm
 That holds the moon she meets you,
 somewhat pale,
 But letting you lift up her coarse flax veil
 And whisper (the damp little hand in
 yours)
 Of love—heart's love—your heart's
 love that endures
 Till death. Tush! No mad mixing
 with the rout
 Of haggard ribalds wandering about
 The hot torchlit wine-scented island-
 house
 Where Friedrich holds his wickedest
 carouse
 Parading to the gay Palermians,
 Soft Messinese, dusk Saracenic clans
 From Nuocera, those tall grave
 dazzling Norse,
 Clear-checked, lank-haired, toothed
 whiter than the morse,
 Queens of the caves of jet stalactites
 He sent his barks to fetch through icy
 seas,
 The blind night seas without a saving-
 star,
 And here in snowy birdskin robes they
 are,
 Sordello, here, mollitious alcoves gilt
 Superb as Byzant-domes that devils
 built
 —Ah, Byzant, there again! no chance
 to go
 Ever like august pleasant Dandolo,
 Worshipping hearts about him for a
 wall,
 Conducted, blind eyes, hundred years
 and all,

Through vanquished 'Byzant to have
 noted him
 What pillar, marble massive, sardius
 slim,
 'Twere fittest we transport to Venice'
 Square—
 Flattered and promised life to touch
 them there
 Soon, by his fervid sons of senators!
 No more lifes, deaths, loves, hatreds,
 peaces, wars—
 Ah, fragments of a Whole ordained
 to be!
 Points in the life I waited! what are ye
 But roundels of a ladder which ap-
 peared
 Awhile the very platform it was reared
 To lift me on—that Happiness I find
 Proofs of my faith in, even in the blind
 Instinct which bade forego you all
 unless
 Ye led me past yourselves? Ay,
 Happiness
 Awaited me; the way life should be
 used
 Was to acquire, and deeds like you
 conducted
 To teach it by a self-revelment
 (deemed
 That very use too long). Whatever
 seemed
 Progress to that was Pleasure; aught
 that stayed
 My reaching it—No Pleasure. I have
 laid
 The roundels down; I climb not;
 still aloft
 The platform stretches! Blissess
 strong and soft
 I dared not entertain elude me; yet
 Never of what they promised could I
 get
 A glimpse till now! The common
 sort, the crowd,
 Exist, perceive; with Being are en-
 dowed,
 However slight, distinct from what
 they See,
 However bounded: Happiness must be
 To feed the first by gleanings from
 the last,
 Attain its qualities, and slow or fast

Become what they behold; such
peace-in-strife

By transmutation is the Use of Life,
The Alien turning Native to the soul
Or body—which instructs me; I am
whole

There and demand a Palma; had the
world

Been from my soul to a like distance
hurled

'Twere Happiness to make it one with
me

Whereas I must, ere I begin to Be,
Include a world, in flesh, I com-
prehend

In spirit now; and this done, what's
to blend

With? Nought is Alien here—my Will
Owns all already; yet can turn it still
Less Native, since my Means to corre-
spond

With Will are so unworthy 'twas my
bond

To tread the very ones that tantalise
Me now into a grave, never to rise—
I die then! Will the rest agree to die?
Next Age or no? Shall its Sordello try
Clue after clue and catch at last the
clue

I miss, that's underneath my finger too,
Twice, thrice a day, perhaps,—some
yearning traced

Deeper, some petty consequence em-
braced

Closer! Why fled I Mantua then?
Complained

So much my Will was fettered, yet
remained

Content within a tether half the range
I could assign it?—able to exchange
My ignorance, I felt, for knowledge,
and

Idle because I could thus under-
stand—

Could e'en have penetrated to its core
Our mortal mystery, and yet forbore,
Preferred elaborating in the dark
My casual stuff, by any wretched spark
Born of my predecessors, tho' one
stroke

Of mine had brought the flame forth!
Mantua's yoke,

My minstrel's-trade, was to behold
mankind,

And my own matter just to bring my
mind

Behold, just extricate, for my ac-
quist,

Each object suffered stifle in the
mist

Convention, hazard, blindness could
impose

In their relation to myself.

He rose.

The level wind carried above the firs
Clouds, the irrevocable travellers,
Onward.

Pushed thus into a drowsy copse,
Arms twine about my neck, each eye
lid drops

Under a humid finger; while there
fleets

Outside the screen a pageant time re-
peats

Never again! To be deposed—
immured

Clandestinely—still petted, still as-
sured

To govern were fatiguing work—the
Sight

Fleeting meanwhile! 'Tis noontide—
wreak ere night

Somehow one's will upon it rather!
Slake

This thirst somehow, the poorest
impress take

That serves! A blasted bud displays
you, torn,

Faint rudiments of the full flower un-
born:

But who divines what petal coats
o'erelasp

Of the bulb dormant in the Mummy's
grasp

Taurello sent . . .

Taurello? Palma sent

Your Trouvere (Naddo interposing
leant

Over the lost bard's shoulder), and
believe,

You cannot more reluctantly conceive
Than I pronounce her message: we
depart

Together: what avail a poet's heart

Verona and her gauds? five blades of
 grass
 suffice him. News? Why, where
 your marish was,
 On its mud-banks smoke rises after
 smoke
 If the valley like a spout of hell new-
 broke.
 Oh, the world's tidings! little thanks,
 I guess,
 For them. The father of our Patroness
 playing Taurello an astounding trick
 Parts between Ecelin and Alberic
 His wealth and goes into a convent:
 both
 Wed Gueffs: the Count and Palma
 plighted troth
 A week since at Verona: and she
 wants
 A doubtless to contrive the marriage-
 chants
 Ere Richard storms Ferrara. Your
 response
 To Palma? Wherefore jest? Depart
 at once?
 A good resolve! In truth I hardly
 hoped
 So prompt an acquiescence. Have
 you groped
 Out wisdom in the wilds here?—
 Thoughts may be
 Over-poetical for poetry?
 Pearl-white you minstrels liken
 Palma's neck,
 And yet what spoils an orient like some
 speck
 Of genuine white turning its own
 white grey?
 You take me? Curse the cicales!
 One more day—
 One eve—appears Verona! Many a
 group
 You mind), instructed of the osprey's
 swoop
 On lynx and ounce, was gathering—
 Christendom
 Sure to receive, whate'er it might be,
 from
 The evening's purpose cheer or detri-
 ment
 Since Friedrich only waited some
 event

Like this of Ghibellins establishing
 Themselves within Ferrara, ere, as
 King
 Of Lombardy, he'd gladdescend there,
 wage
 Old warfare with the Pontiff, dis-
 engage
 His barons from the burghers, and
 restore
 The rule of Charlemagne broken of
 yore
 By Hildebrand. That eve-long each
 by each
 Sordello sate and Palma: little speech
 At first in that dim closet, face with
 face
 Despite the tumult in the market place
 Exchanging quick low laughter:
 now would gush
 Word upon word to meet a sudden
 flush,
 A look left off, a shifting lips' sur-
 mise—
 But for the most, their two
 histories
 Ran best thro' the locked fingers and
 linked arms.
 And so the night flew on with its
 alarms
 Till in burst one of Palma's retinue:
 Now, Lady, gasped he. Then arose
 the two
 And leaned into Verona's air dead still
 A balcony lay black beneath until
 Out 'mid a gush of torchfire, grey-
 haired men
 Came on it and harangued the people:
 then
 Sea-like that people surging to and fro
 Shouted, Hale forth the Carroch—
 trumpets, ho,
 A flourish! run it in the ancient
 grooves—
 Back from the bell! Hammer! that
 whom behooves
 May hear the League is up! Peal!
 learn who list,
 Verona means not be the first break
 tryst
 To-morrow with the League.
 Enough. Now turn—
 Over the Eastern cypresses: discern

Is any beacon set a-glimmer?

Rang

The air with shouts that overpowered
the clang

Of the incessant carroch even.
Haste—

The Candle's at the gate-way! ere it
waste

Each soldier stands beside, armed fit
to march

With Tiso Sampier through that
Eastern arch!

Ferrara's succoured, Palma!

Once again

They sate together; some strange
thing in train

To say, so difficult was Palma's place
In taking, with a coy fastidious grace

Like the bird's flutter ere it fix and
feed;

But when she felt she held her friend
indeed

Safe, she threw back her curls, began
implant

Her lessons; telling of another want
Goito's quiet nourished than his own;

Palma—to serve, as him—be served,
alone

Importing; Agnes' milk so neutralised
The blood of Ecelin. Nor be sur-
prised

If, while Sordello nature captive led,
In dream was Palma wholly subjected

To some out-soul which dawned not
though s' e pined

Delaying still (pursued she) heart and
mind

To live: how dared I let expand the
force

Within me till some out-soul whose
resource

It grew for should direct it? Every law
(Of life, its fitnesses and every flaw,

Must that determine whose corporeal
shape

Would be no other than the prime
escape

And revelation to me of a Will
Orb-like o'ershrouded and inscrutable

Above except the point I was to know
Shone that myself, my powers, might

overflow

So far, so much; as now it signified
Which earthly shape it henceforth
chose to guide

Me by whose lip selected to declare
Its oracles, what fleshly garb would
wear:

—The first of intimations, whom to
love;

The next, how love him. And that
orb above

The castle-covert and the mountain-
close

Slow in appearing, if beneath arose
Cravings, aversions, and our green
precinct

Take pride in me at unawares dis-
tinct

With this or that endowment, how
represt

At once such jetting power shrank
to the rest!

Was I to have a chance touch spoil
me, leave

My spirit thence unfitted to receive
The consummating spell?—that spell
so near

Moreover: waits he not the waking
year?

His almond-blossoms must be honey-
ripe

By this; to welcome him fresh runnels
stripe

The thawed ravines; because of him
the wind

Walks like a herald. I shall surely
find

Him now!

And chief that earnest April morn
Of Richard's Love-court was it time,

so worn
And white her cheek, so idly her
blood beat,

Sitting that morn beside the Lady's
feet

And saying as she prompted; till
outburst

One face from all the faces—not then
first

She knew it; where in maple-chamber
glooms,

Crowned with what sanguine-heart
pomegranate blooms

Advanced it ever? Men's acknow-
 ledgment
 Sanctioned her own: 'twas taken,
 Palma's bent,
 she said.
 And day by day the Tuscan dumb
 sat scheming, scheming; Ecelin would
 come
 Gaunt, scared, Cesano baffles me, he'd
 say:
 Better I fought it out my father's
 way!
 Strange Ferrara in its drowning
 flats
 And you and your Taurello yonder—
 what's
 Romano's business there? An hour's
 concern
 To cure the forward Chief!—induced
 return
 Much heartened from those overmean-
 ing eyes,
 Wound up to persevere, his enterprise
 Marked out anew, its exigent of wit
 Apportioned, she at liberty to sit
 And scheme against the next emer-
 gence, I—
 To covet what I deemed their sprite,
 made fly
 Or fold the wing—to con your horo-
 scope
 For leave command those steely shafts
 shoot ope
 Or straight assuage their blinding
 eagerness
 To blank smooth snow: what sem-
 blance of success
 To any of my plans for making you
 Romano's lord? That chief—her
 children too—
 The Salinguerra would obstruct me
 sheer,
 And the insuperable Tuscan here
 eyed me! But one wild eve that
 Lady died
 In her lone chamber: only I beside:
 Taurello far at Naples, and my sire
 At Padua, Ecelin away in ire
 With Alberic: she held me thus—a
 clutch
 To make our spirits as our bodies
 touch—

And so began flinging the past up,
 heaps
 Of un-outh treasure from their sunless
 sleeps
 Within her soul; deeds rose along
 with dreams,
 Fragments of many miserable schemes.
 Secrets, more secrets, then—no, not
 the last—
 'Mongst others, like a casual trick o'
 the past,
 How . . . ay, she told me, gathering
 her face
 That face of hers into one arch-
 grimace
 To die with . . .
 Friend, 'tis gone! but not the fear
 Of that fell laughing, heard as now I
 hear.
 Nor faltered voice, nor seemed her
 heart grow weak,
 When i' the midst abrupt she ceased
 to speak
 —Dead, as to serve a purpose, mark,
 for in
 Rushed o' the very instant Ecelin
 (How summoned who divines?) look-
 ing as if
 Part understood he why his mate lay
 stiff
 Already in my arms, for, Girl, how
 must,
 I manage Este in the matter thrust
 Upon me, how unravel th' ir bad coil?
 Since (he declared) 'tis on your brow
 —a soil
 Like hers there! then said in a breath
 he lacked
 No counsel after all, had signed no
 pact
 With devils, nor was treason here or
 there,
 Goito or Vicenza, his affair:
 He'd bury it in Adelaide's deep grave
 And begin life afresh, nor, either,
 slave
 For any Friedrich's or Taurello's sake!
 What bootied him to meddle or to
 make
 In Lombardy? 'Twas afterward I
 knew
 The meaning of his promise to undo

All she had done—why marriages
 were made,
 New friendships entered on, old
 followers paid
 With curses for their pains, people's
 amaze
 At height, when, passing out by Gate
 St. Blaise
 He stopped short in Vicenza, bent his
 head
 Over a friar's neck, had vowed, he
 said,
 Long since, nigh thirty years, because
 his wife
 And child were saved there, to bestow
 his life
 On God, his gettings on the Church.
 Exiled
 Within Goito, still that dream be-
 guiled
 Her days and nights; 'twas found
 the orb she sought
 To serve, those glimpses came of
 Fomalhaut
 No other: how then serve it?—
 authorise
 Him and Romano mingle destinies?
 And straight Romano's angel stood
 beside
 Her who had else been Boniface's
 bride.
 For Salinguerra 'twas, the neck low
 bent,
 And voice lightened to music as he
 meant
 To learn not teach me how Romano
 waxed,
 Wherefore it waned and why if I
 relaxed
 My grasp (thinks I!) would drop
 a thing effete,
 Frayed by itself, unequal to complete
 The course and counting every step
 astray
 A gain so much. Romano every
 way
 Stable, a House now—why this start-
 ing back
 Into the very outset of its track?
 This recent patching-principle allied
 Our House with other Houses—what
 beside

Concerned the apparition, yon grim
 Knight
 Who followed Conrad hither in such
 plight
 His utmost wealth was reckoned in
 his steed?
 For Ecelo, that prowler, was decreed
 A task in the beginning hazardous
 To him as ever task can be to us,
 But did the weather-beaten thief
 despair
 When first our crystal cincture of
 warm air,
 That binds the Trivisan as its spice-belt
 (Crusaders say) the tract where Jesus
 dwelt,
 Furtive he pierced and Este was to
 face—
 Despaired Saponian Strength of Lom-
 bard Grace?
 Said he for making surer aught made
 sure.
 Maturing what already was mature?
 No; his heart prompted Ecelo, Con-
 front
 Este, inspect yourself. What's nature?
 Wont.
 Discard three-parts your nature and
 adopt
 The rest as an advantage! Old
 Strength propped
 The earliest of Podestas among
 The Vincentines, no less than, while
 there sprung
 His Palace up in Padua like a threat,
 Their noblest spied a Grace unnoticed
 yet
 In Conrad's crew. Thus far the
 object gained,
 Romano was established; has re-
 mained—
 For are you not Italian, truly peer
 With Este? Azzo better soothes it ear*
 Than Alberic? or is this lion's-crine
 From over-mount (this yellow hair of
 mine)
 So weak a graft on Agnes Este's
 stock?
 Thus went he on with something of
 a mock)

* [Sic.]

Wherefore recoil then from the very
fate
Conceded you, refuse to imitate
Your model farther? Este long since
left
Being mere Este: as a blade its heft,
Este requires the Pope to further
him:
And you, the Kaiser: whom your
father's whim
Foregoes or, better, never shall forego
If Palma dares pursue what Ecelo
Commenced but Ecelin desists from:
just
As Adelaide of Susa could intrust
Her donative (that's Piedmont to the
Pope,
The Alpine-pass for him to shut or
ope
Twixt France and Italy) to the su-
rb
Matilda's perfecting,—lest aught dis-
turb
Our Adelaide's great counter-project
for
Giving her Trentine to the Emperor
With passage here from Germany,
shall you
Take it, my slender plodding talent,
too—
Urged me Taurello with his half-
smile.

He
As Patron of the scattered family
Conveyed me to his Mantua, kept in
bruit
Azzo's alliances and Richard's suit
Until, the Kaiser excommunicate,
Nothing remains, Taurello said, but
wait
Some rash procedure: Palma was the
link,
As Agnes' child, between us, and
they shrink
From losing Palma: judge if we ad-
vance
Your father's method your inheri-
tance!
The day she was betrothed to Boniface
At Padua by Taurello's self, took place
The outrage of the Ferrarese: again,
That day she sought Verona with the
train

Agreed for, by Taurello's policy
Convicting Richard of the fault, since
she
Were present to annul or to confirm,
Richard, whose patience had outstayed
its term,
Quitted Verona for the siege.
And now
What glory may engird Sordello's
brow
For this? A month since Oliero
sunk
All Ecelin that was into a Monk;
But how could Salinguerra so forget
His liege of thirty summers as grudge
yet
One effort to recover him? He sent
Forthwith the tidings of the Town's
event
To Oliero, adding, he, despite
The recent folly, recognised his right
To order such proceedings: should he
wring
Its uttermost advantage out, or fling
This chance away? If not him, who
was Head
Now of the House? Through me
that missive sped;
My father's answer will by me return.
Behold! For him, he writes, no more
concern
With strife than for his children with
the plots
Of Friedrich. Old engagements out
he blots
For aye: Taurello shall no more
subserve,
Nor Ecelin impose! Lest this un-
nerve
Him therefore at this juncture, slack
his grip
Of Richard, suffer the occasion slip,
I, in his sons' default (who, mating
with
Este, forsake Romano as the frith
Its mainsea for the firmland that
makes head
Against) I stand, Romano; in their
stead
Assume the station they desert, and
give
Stull, as the Kaiser's Representative,

Taurello licence he demands. Mid-
 night—
 Morning—by noon to-morrow, mak-
 ing light
 Of the League's issue, we, in some
 gay weed
 Like yours disguised together, may
 precede
 The arbitrators to Ferrara ; reach
 Him, let Taurello's noble accents
 teach
 The rest ! then say if I have miscon-
 ceived
 Your destiny, too readily believed
 The Kaiser's cause your own !
 And Palma's fled.
 Though no affirmative disturbs the
 head
 A dying lamp-flame sinks and rises
 o'er
 Like the alighted planet Pollux wore.
 Until, morn breaking, he resolves to be
 Gate-vein of this heart's blood of
 Lombardy,
 Soul to their body--have their aggre-
 gate
 Of souls and bodies, and so conquer
 fate
 Though he should live, a centre of
 disgust
 Even, apart, core of the outward crust
 He vivifies, assimilates. For thus
 Bring I Sordello to the rapturous
 Exclaim at the crowd's cry, because
 one found
 Of life was quite accomplished and he
 found
 Not only that a soul, howe'er its
 might,
 Is insufficient to its own delight,
 Both in corporeal organs and in skill
 By means of such to body forth its
 Will -
 And, after, insufficient to apprise
 Men of that Will, oblige them recognise
 The Hid by the Revealed—but that,
 —the last
 Nor lightest of the struggles overpast.
 His Will, bade abdicate, which would
 not void
 The throne, might sit there, suffer he
 enjoyed

The same a varied and divine
 array
 Incapable of homage the first way
 Nor fit to render incidentally
 Tribute connived at, taken by the by,
 In joys : and if, thus warranted
 rescind
 The ignominious exile of mankind
 Whose proper service, ascertained
 intact
 As yet (by Him to be themselves
 made act,
 Not watch Sordello acting each of
 them)
 Was to secure--if the true diadem
 Seemed imminent while our Sordello
 drank
 The wisdom of that golden Palma,
 thank
 Verona's Lady in her Citadel
 Founded by Gaulish Brennus legends
 tell—
 And truly when she left him the sun
 reared
 A head like the first clamberer's that
 peered
 A-top the Capitol, his face on flame
 With triumph, triumphing till Manlius
 came.
 Nor slight too much my rhymes—
 " that spring, disspread,
 Dispart, disperse, lingering overhead
 Like an escape of angels ! " Rather
 say
 My transcendental platan ! mounting
 gay
 (An archimage so courts a novice-
 queen)
 With tremulous silvered trunk, whence
 branches sheen
 Laugh out, thick-foliaged next, a-
 shiver soon
 With coloured buds, then glowing
 like the moon
 One mild flame, last a pause, a burst,
 and all
 Her ivory limbs are smothered by a
 fall,
 Bloom-flickers and fruit-sparkles and
 leaf-dust,
 Ending the weird work prosecuted
 just

For her amusement: he decrepit,
 stark,
 Dozes; her uncontrolled delight may
 mark
 Apart—
 Yet not so, surely never so!
 Only as good my soul were suffered
 go
 O'er the lagune: forth fare thee, put
 aside
 Entrance thy synod, as a God may
 glide
 Out of the world he fills and leave it
 mute
 A myriad ages as we men compute,
 Returning into it without a break
 I' the consciousness! They sleep,
 and I awake
 O'er the lagune.
 Sordello said once, note
 In just such songs as Eglamor, say,
 wrote
 With heart and . . . and strength, for
 he believed
 Himself achieving all to be achieved
 By singer: in such songs you find
 alone
 Completeness, judge the song and
 singer One
 And either's purpose answered, his
 in it
 Or is in him: while from true works
 (to wit
 Sordello's dream-performances that
 will
 He never more than dream) escapes
 there still
 Some proof the singer's proper life's
 beneath
 The life his song exhibits, this a
 sheath
 To that; a passion and a knowledge
 far
 Transcending these, majestic as they
 are,
 Smoulder; his lay was but an episode
 In the bard's life. Which evidence
 you owe I
 I some slight weariness, a looking
 off
 Or start away, the childish skit or
 scoff

In "Charlemagne," for instance,
 dreamed divine
 In every point except one restive line
 Those daughters! what significance
 may lurk
 In that? My life commenced before
 that work,
 Continues after it, as on I fare
 With no more stopping possibly, no
 care
 To jot down (says the bard) the why
 and how
 And where and when of life, as I do
 now:
 But shall I cease to live for that?
 Alas
 For you! who sigh, when shall it
 come to pass
 We read that story, when will he
 compress
 The future years, his whole life's
 business,
 Into another lay which that one
 flout,
 Howe'er inopportune it be, lets out
 Engrosses him already while professed
 To meditate with us eternal rest?
 Strike sail, slip cable! here the
 galley's moored
 For once, the awning's stretched, the
 poles assured;
 Noontide above; except the wave's
 crisp dash,
 Or buzz of colibri, or tortoise' splash
 The margin's silent; out with every
 spoil
 Made in our tracking, coil by mighty
 coil,
 This serpent of a river to his head
 I' the midst! Admire each treasure
 as we spread
 The turf to help us tell our history
 Aright: give ear then, gentles, and
 descry
 The groves of giant rushes how they
 grew
 Like demons' endlong tresses we
 sailed through,
 What mountains' vawned, forests to
 give us vent
 Opened, each doleful side, yet on we
 went

Till . . . may that beetle (shake your cap) attest
 The springing of a land-wind from the West !
 Wherefore? Ah yes, you frolic it to-day :
 To-morrow, and the pageant's moved away
 Down to the poorest tent-pole : we and you
 Part company : no other may pursue
 Eastward your voyage, be informed what fate
 Intends, if triumph or decline await
 The tempter of the everlasting steppe.
 I sung this on an empty palace-step
 At Venice : why should I break off, nor sit
 Longer upon my step, exhaust the fit
 England gave birth to? Who's adorable
 Enough reclaim a——no Sordello's Will
 Alack!—be queen to me? That Bassanese
 Busied among her smoking fruit-boats? These
 Perhaps from our delicious Asolo
 Who twinkle, pigeons o'er the portico
 Not prettier, bind late lilies into sheaves
 To deck the bridge-side chapel, dropping leaves
 Soiled by their own loose gold-meal?
 Ah, beneath
 The cool arch stoops she, brownest-cheek!
 Her wreath
 Endure a month—a half-month—if I make
 A queen of her, continue for her sake
 Sordello's story? Nay, that Paduan girl
 Splashes with barer legs where a live whirl
 In the dead black Giudecca proves sea-weed
 Drifting has sucked down three, four, all indeed
 Save one pale-red striped, pale-blue turbaned poet
 For gondolas.
 You sad disheveled ghost
 That pluck at me and point, are you advised
 I breathe? Let stay those girls (e'en her disguised
 Jewels in the locks that love no crown like
 Their native field-buds, and the green wheat spike,
 So fair!—Who left this end of June's turmoil,
 Shook off, as might a lily its gold soil,
 Pomp, save a foolish gem or two, and free
 I came join the peasants o'er the kissing sea.)
 Look they too happy, too tricked out? Confess
 You have no niggard stock of happiness
 To share that, do one's uttermost, dear wretch,
 One labours ineffectually stretch
 It o'er you so that mother, children, both
 May equitably flaunt the sumpter-cloth!
 No: tear the robe yet farther: be content
 With seeing some few score pre-eminent
 Through shreds of it, acknowledged happy wights,
 Engrossing what should furnish all, by rights—
 (At home we dizen scholars, chiefs and kings,
 But in this magic weather hardly clings
 The old garb gracefully: Venice a type
 Of Life, 'twixt blue and blue extends, a stripe,
 As Life, the somewhat, hangs 'twixt nought and nought:
 'Tis Venice, and 'tis Life—as good you sought
 To spare me the Piazza's slippery stone
 Or stay me thrid her cross canals alone.
 As hinder Life what seems the single good
 Sole purpose, one thing to be understood

Of Life)—best, be they Peasants, be
 they Queens,
 Take them, I say made happy any
 means,
 Parade them for the common credit,
 vouch
 A luckless residue we send to crouch
 In corners out of sight was just as
 framed
 For happiness, its portion might have
 claimed
 And so, could we concede, that por-
 tion, stalked
 Fastuous as any—such my project,
 balked
 Already; hardly venture I adjust
 A lappet when I find you! To mis-
 trust
 Me! nor unreasonably. You, no
 doubt,
 Haveth true knack of tiring suitors out
 With those thin lips on tremble, lash-
 less eyes
 Inveterately tear-shot—there, be wise,
 Mistress of mine, there, there, as if I
 meant
 You insult! Shall your friend (not
 slave) be shent
 For speaking home? Beside care-bit
 erased
 Broken-up beauties ever took my taste
 Supremely, and I love you more, far
 more
 That her I looked should foot Life's
 temple-floor—
 Years ago, leagues at distance, when
 and where
 A whisper came, Seek others, since
 thy care
 Is found, thy life's provision; if a race
 Should be thy mistress, and into one
 face
 The many faces crowd? Ah, had I,
 judge,
 Or no, your secret? Rough apparel
 grudge
 All ornaments save tag or tassel worn
 To hint we are not thoroughly for-
 lorn—
 Sketch bonnet, unloop mantle, care-
 less go
 Alone (that's saddest but it must be so)

Through Venice, sing now and now
 glance aside,
 Aught desultory or undignified,
 And, ravishingest lady, will you pass
 Or not each formidable group, the
 mass
 Before the Basilike (that feast gone by,
 God's day, the great June Corpus
 Domini)
 And wistfully foregoing proper men,
 Come timid up to me for alms? And
 then
 The luxury to hesitate, feign do
 Some unexampl'd grace, when whom
 but you
 Dare I bestow your own upon? And
 hear
 Me out before you say it is to sneer
 I call you ravishing, for I regret
 Little that she, whose early foot was
 set
 Forth as she'd plant it on a pedestal,
 Now i' the silent city, seems to fall
 Towards me—no wreath, only a lip's
 unrest
 To quiet, surcharged eyelids to be
 pressed
 Dry of their tears upon my bosom:
 strange
 Such sad chance should produce in
 thee such change,
 My love! warped men, souls, bodies!
 yet God spoke
 Of right-hand foot and eye—selects
 our yoke,
 Sordello! as your poetship may find:
 So sleep upon my shoulder, child, nor
 mind
 Their foolish talk; we'll manage
 reinstate
 The matter; ask moreover, when
 they prate
 Of evil men past hope, don't each
 contrive
 Despite the evil you abuse to live?
 Keeping, each losel, thro' a maze of
 lies,
 His own conceit of truth? to which
 he hies
 By obscure tortuous windings, if you
 will,
 But to himself not inaccessible;

He sees it, and his lies are for the crowd
 Who cannot see; some fancied right allowed
 His vilest wrong, empowered the fellow clutch
 One pleasure from the multitude of such
 Denied him: then assert, all men appear
 To think all better than themselves, by here
 Trusting a crowd they wrong; but really, say,
 All men think all men stupider than they
 Since save themselves no other comprehends
 The complicated scheme to make amends
 —Evil, the scheme by which, thro' Ignorance
 Good labours to exist. A slight advance
 Merely to find the sickness you die through
 And nought beside: but if one can't eschew
 One's portion in the common lot, at least
 One can avoid an ignorance increased
 Tenfold by dealing out hint after hint
 How nought is like dispensing without stint
 The water of life —so easy to dispense
 Beside, when one has probed the centre whence
 Commotion's born could tell you of it all
 —Meantime, just meditate my mad-rigal
 O' the mugwort that conceals a dew-drop safe!
 What, dullard? we and you in smothery chafe
 Babes, baldheads, stumbled thus far into Zin
 The Horrid, getting neither out nor in,
 A hungry sun above us, sands among
 Our throats, each dromedary lolls a tongue,
 Each camel churns a sick and frothy chap,
 And you, 'twixt tales of Potiphar's mishap
 And sonnets on the earliest ass that spoke,
 Remark, you wonder any one needs choke
 With founts about! Potsherd him, Gibeonites,
 While awkwardly enough your Moses smites
 The rock though he forego his Promised Land,
 Thereby, have Satan claim his carcass, and
 Dance, forsooth, Metaphysic Poet . . . ah
 Mark ye the dim first oozings? Meribah!
 And quaffing at the fount my courage gained
 Recall—not that I prompt ye—who explained . . .
 Presumptuous' interrupts one. You not I
 'Tis Brother, marvel at and magnify
 Mine office: office, quotha? can we get
 To the beginning of the office yet?
 What do we here? simply experiment
 Each on the other's power and its intent
 When elsewhere tasked, if this of mine were trucked
 For Thine to either's profit,—watch construct,
 In short, an engine: with a finished one
 What it can do is all, nought how 'tis done;
 But this of ours yet in probation, dusk
 A kernel of strange wheelwork thro' its husk
 Grows into shape by quarters and by halves;
 Remark this tooth's spring, wonder what that valve's
 Fall bodes, presume each faculty's device,
 Make out each other more or less precise—

The scope of the whole engine's to be proved—
 We die: which means to say the whole's removed,
 Dismounted wheel by wheel that complex gin
 To be set up anew elsewhere, begin
 A task indeed but with a clearer clime
 Than the murky lodgment of our building-time:
 And then, I grant you, it behoves forget
 How 'tis done—all that must amuse us yet
 So long: and while thou turnest on thy heel
 Pray that I be not busy slitting steel
 Or shredding brass upon a virgin shore
 Under a cluster of fresh stars, before
 I name a tithe the wheels I trust to do!
 So occupied, then, are we: hitherto,
 At present, and a weary while to come,
 The office of ourselves nor blind nor dumb
 And seeing somewhat of man's state, has been,
 The worst of us, to say they so have seen;
 The better, what it was they saw; the best,
 Impart the gift of seeing to the rest:
 So that I glance, says such an one, around,
 And there's no face but I can read profound
 Disclosures in; this stands for hope, that—fear,
 And for a speech, a deed in proof, look here!
 Stoop, else the strings of blossom, where the nuts
 O'erarch, will blind thee! said I not? she shuts
 With eyes this time, so close the hazels meet!
 Thus, prisoned in the Piombi, I repeat
 Moments one rove occasioned, o'er and o'er,
 Putting 'twixt me and madness evermore

Thy sweet shape, Elys! therefore stoop—

That's truth!

(Applaud you) the incarcerated youth
 Would say that!

Youth? Plara the bard? set down
 That Plara spent his youth in a grim town

Whose cramped ill-featured streets
 huddled about

The minster for protection, never out
 Of its black belfry's shadow or bells' roar:

Brighter the sun illumed the suburbs,
 more

Ugly and absolute that shade's reproof
 For any chance escape of joy some roof

Taller than they allowed the rest
 detect

Before the sole permitted laugh
 (suspect

Who could, 'twas meant for laughter,
 that ploughed cheek's

Repulsive gleam!) when the sun
 stopped both peaks

Of the cleft belfry like a fiery wedge,
 Then sank, a huge flame on its socket's edge,

Whose leavings on the grey glass
 oriel-pane

Were ghastly some few minutes more:
 no rain—

The Minster minded that! in heaps
 the dust

Lay every where: that town, the
 Minster's trust,

Held Plara; who, its denizen, bade
 hail

In twice twelve sonnets, Naddo
 Tempe's vale.

Exact the town, the minster and
 the street!

As all mirth triumphs, sadness means
 defeat:

Lust triumphs and is gay, Love's
 triumphed o'er

And sad: but Lucio's sad: I said
 before

Love's sad, not Lucio; one who
 loves may be

As gay his love has leave to hope, as he

Downcast that lusts' desire escapes
the springe :

'Tis of the mood itself I speak, what
tinge

Determines it, else colourless, or mirth,
Or melancholy, as from Heaven or
Earth.

Ay, that's the variation's gist!
Indeed?

Thus far advanced in safety then,
proceed!

And having seen too what I saw,
be bold

Enough encounter what I do behold
(That's sure) but you must take on
trust! Attack

The use and purpose of such sights!
Alack,

Not so unwisely hastes the crowd
dispense

On Salinguerras praise in preference
To the Sordellos: men of action these!

Who seeing just as little as you please
Yet turn that little to account; engage

With, do not gaze at; carry on a stage
The work o' the world, not merely
make report

The work existed ere their time—
In short,

When at some future no-time a brave
band

Sees, using what it sees, then shake
my hand

In heaven, my brother! Meanwhile
where's the hurt

Of keeping the Makers-see on the alert
At whose defection mortals stare aghast

As though Heaven's bounteous win-
dows were slammed fast

Incontinent? whereas all you beneath
Should scowl at, curse them, bruise
lips, break their teeth

Who ply the pullies for neglecting you:
And therefore have I moulded, made
anew

A Man, delivered to be turned and tried,
Be angry with or pleased at. On
your side

Have ye times, places, actors of your
own?

Try them upon Sordello once full-
grown,

And then—ah then! If Hercules
first parched

His foot in Egypt only to be marched
A sacrifice for Jove with pomp to suit,
What chance have I? The demigod
was mute

Till at the altar, where time out of mind
Such guests became oblations, chaplet-
twined

His forehead long enough, and he began
Slaying the slayers, nor escaped a
man—

Take not affront, my gentle audience!
wh. m

No Hercules shall make his hecatomb
Believe, none from his brows your
chaplet rend -

That's your kind suffrage, yours, yes,
yours, my friend

Whose great verse blares uninter-
mittent on

Like any trumpeter at Marathon,
He'll testify who when Plateas grew
scant

Put up with Etna for a stimulant!
And well too, I acknowledged, as it
loomed

Over the Midland sea that morn, pre-
sumed

All day, demolished by the blazing
West

At eve, while towards it, tilting cloud-
lets prest

Like Persian ships for Salamis,
Friend, wear

A crest proud as desert while I declare
Had I a flawless ruby fit to wring

A tear its colour from that painted king
To lose. I would, for that one smile
which went

To my heart, fling it in the sea content
Wearing your verse in place, an amulet

Sovereign against low-thoughtedness
and fret!

My English Eyebright, if you are not
glad

That, as I stopped my task awhile,
the sad

Disheveled form wherein I put man-
kind

To come at times and keep my pact
in mind

Renewed me, —hear no crickets in the
 hedge
 Nor let a glowworm spot the river's sedge
 At home, and may the summer
 showers gush
 Without a warning from the missel
 thrush !
 For, Eyebright, what I sing's the
 fate of such
 As find our common nature (overmuch
 Despised because restricted and unfit
 To bear the burthen they impose on it)
 Cling when they would discard it ;
 craving strength
 To leap from the allotted world, at
 length
 'Tis left they floundering without a
 term
 Lach a God's germ, but doomed re-
 main a germ
 In unexpanded infancy, assure
 Yourself, nor misconceive my por-
 traiture
 Nor undervalue its adornments quaint !
 What seems a fiend perchance may
 prove a saint :
 I under a story ancient pens transmit,
 Then say if you condemn me or acquit.
 John the Beloved, banished Antioch
 For Patmos, bade collectively his flock
 Farewell but set apart the closing eve
 To comfort some his exile most would
 grieve
 He knew : a touching spectacle, that
 house
 In motion to receive him ! Xanthus'
 spouse
 A u missed, made panther's meat a
 month since : but
 Xanthus himself (for 'twas his nephew
 shut
 'Twixt boards and sawn asunder)
 Polycarp,
 S it Charicle next year no wheel could
 warp
 I wear by Cæsar's fortune, with the
 rest
 Were ranged ; thre' whom the grey
 disciple prest
 P ily blessing right and left, just stopt
 To pat one infant's curls the hangman
 cropt

Soon after, reached the portal ; on its
 hinge
 The door turns and he enters — what
 deep twinge
 Ruins the smiling mouth, those wide
 eyes fix
 Whereon ? How like some spectral
 candlestick's
 Branch the disciple's arms ! Dead
 swooned he, woke
 Anon, heaved sigh, made shift to gasp
 heart-broke
 Get thee behind me, Satan ! have I
 toiled
 To no more purpose ? is the gospel
 foiled
 Here too, and o'er my son's, my
 Xanthus' hearth.
 Pourtrayed with sooty garb and
 features swarth—
 Ah Xanthus, am I to thy roof beguiled
 To see the — the — the Devil domiciled ?
 Where to sobbed Xanthus, Father, 'tis
 yourself
 Installed, a limning which our utmost
 pelf
 Went to procure against to-morrow's
 loss,
 And that's no twy-prong but a pas-
 toral cross
 You're painted with ! The puckered
 brows unfold—
 And you shall hear Sordello's story told.

BOOK THE FOURTH

MEANTIME Ferrara lay in rueful case :
 The lady-city, for whose sole embrace
 Her pair of suitors struggled, felt their
 arms
 A brawny mischief to the fragile
 charms
 They tugged for—one discovering to
 twist
 Her tresses twice or thrice about his
 wrist
 Secured a point of vantage—one, how
 best
 He'd parry that by planting in her
 breast

His elbow-spike—both parties too intent
For nothing, howe'er the battle went,
Its conqueror would have a corpse to kiss.

May Bonifacio be duly damned for this!
Howled some old Ghibellin, as up he turned,

From the wet heap of rubbish where they burned

His house, a little skull with dazzling teeth:

A boon, sweet Christ—let Salinguerra see the

In hell for ever, Christ, and let myself
Be there to laugh at him! moaned some young Guelf

Stumbling upon a shrivelled hand nailed fast

To the charred lintel of the doorway last

His father stood within to bid him speed.

The thoroughfares were overrun with weed

—Docks, quitchgrass, loathly mallows
no man plants.

The stranger none of its inhabitants
Crept out of doors to taste fresh air again,

And ask the purpose of a sumptuous train

Admitted on a morning; every town
Of the East League was come by envoy down

To treat for Richard's ransom: here you saw

The Vicentine, here snowy oxen draw
The Paduan carroch, its vermilion cross

On its white field: a-tiptoe o'er the fosse

Looked Legate Montelungo wistfully
After the flock of steeples he might spy

In Este's time, gone (doubts he) long ago

To mend the ramparts—sure the layards know

The Pope's as good as here! They paced the streets

More soberly. At last, Taurello greets

The League, announced a pursuivant,
—will match

Its courtesy, and labours to despatch
At earliest Tito, Friedrich's Pretor, sent

On pressing matters from his post at Trent

With Mainard Count of Tyrol, simply waits

Their going to receive the delegates.
Tito! Our delegates exchanged glance,

And, keeping the main way, admired askance

The lazy engines of outlandish birth
Couched like a king each on its bank of earth

Arbalist, manganel and catapult;
While stationed by, as waiting a result.

Lean silent gangs of mercenari ceased

Working to watch the strangers—this, at least,

Were better spared; he scarce presumes gainsay

The League's decision! Get our friend away

And profit for the future: how else teach

Azzo 'tis not so safe within claw's reach

Till Salinguerra's final gasp be blown?

Those mere convulsive scratches find the bone

—Who bade him bloody the spent osprey's nare?

The carrochs halted in the public square.

Pennons of every blazon once a-flaunt,
Men prattled, freelier than the crested gaunt

White ostrich with a horse-shoe in her beak

Was missing; whosoever chose might speak

Ecelin boldly out: so, Ecelin
Needed his wife to swallow half the sin

And sickens by himself: the devil's whelp

He styles his son dwindles away, no help

From conserves, your fine triple-
 curded froth
 Of virgin's blood, your Venice viper-
 broth
 a? Jubilate! Tush! no little word
 at utter here that's not distinctly
 heard
 At Oliero: he was absent sick
 When we besieged Bassano—who i?
 the thick
 Of the work perceived the progress
 Azzo made
 Like Ecelin? through his witch
 Adelaide
 Who managed it so well that night by
 night
 At their bed-foot stood up a soldier-
 sprite
 Not fresh, pale by-and-by without a
 wound,
 A I when he came with eyes filmed
 as in swoond
 They knew the place was taken—
 Ominous
 Our Ghibellins should get what
 cautalous
 Old Redbeard sought from Azzo's sire
 to wrench
 A only; St. George contrived his town
 a trench
 Of the marshes, an impermeable bar;
 Ecelin is meant the tutelal
 Of Padua rather; veins embrace upon
 His hand like Brenta and Bacchi-
 glion . . .
 What now? The founts! God's
 bread, touch not a plank!
 A rawling hell of carrion—every tank
 A kee-full! found out just now to
 Cino's cost—
 The same who gave Taurello's side
 for lost,
 A making no account of fortune's
 neals,
 sed to bidge from Padua then,
 but sneal,
 now with Concorezzi—Faith!
 they diag
 A rarroch to San Vinal plant the flag
 His own Palace so adroitly razed
 He knew it not; a sort of Guelf folk
 gazed
 And laughed apart; Cino disliked
 their air—
 Must pluck up spirit, show he does
 not care
 Seats himself on the tank's edge—
 will begin
 To hum, *za za, Cavalier Ecelin—*
 A silence; he gets warmer, clinks to
 chime,
 Now both feet plough the ground,
 deeper each time,
 At last, *za za*, and up with a fierce
 kick
 Comes his own mother's face caught
 by the thick
 Grey hair about his spur!
 Which means, they lift
 The covering Taurello made a shift
 To stretch upon the truth; as well
 avoid
 Further disclosures; leave them thus
 employed.
 Our dropping Autumn morning clears
 apace,
 And poor Ferrara puts a softened face
 On her misfortunes, save one spot—
 this tall
 Huge foursquare line of red brick
 garden-wall
 Bastioned within by trees of every
 sort
 On three sides, slender, spreading,
 long and short
 (Each grew as it contrived, the poplar
 ramped,
 The fig-tree reared itself), but stark
 and cramped,
 Made fools of; whence upon the very
 edge,
 Running 'twixt trunk and trunk to
 smooth one ledge
 Of shade, are shrubs inserted, warp
 and woof,
 Which smother up that variance.
 Scale the roof
 Of solid tops and over the slope you
 slide
 Down to a grassy space level and
 wide,
 Here and there dotted with a tree,
 but trees
 Of rarer leaf, each foreigner at ease,

Set by itself; and in the centre spreads,
 Born upon three uneasy leopards' heads,
 A laver, broad and shallow, one
 bright spirt
 Of water bubbles in: the walls begirt
 With trees leave off on either hand:
 pursue
 Your path along a wondrous avenue
 Those walls abut on, heaped of gleamy
 stone,
 With aloes leering everywhere, grey-
 grown
 From many a Moorish summer; how
 they wind
 Out of the fissures! likelier to bind
 The building than those rusted cramps
 high drop
 Already in the eating sunshine. Stop
 You clinging shapes above there! Ah,
 the pride
 Or else despair of the whole country-
 side—
 A range of statues, swarming o'er
 with wasps,
 God, goddess, woman, man, your
 Greek rough-rasps
 In crumbling Naples marble! meant
 to look
 Like those Messina marbles Constance
 took
 Delight in, or Taurello's self conveyed
 To Mantua for his mistress, Adelaide,
 A certain font with caryatides
 Since cloistered at Goito; only, these
 Are up and doing, not abashed, a troop
 Able to right themselves—who see
 you, stoop
 O' the instant after you their arms!
 unplucked
 By this or that you pass; for they
 conduct
 To terrace raised on terrace, and,
 between,
 Creatures of brighter mould and
 braver mien
 Than any yet, the choicest of the Isle
 No doubt; here, left a sullen breath-
 ing-while,
 Up-gathered on himself the Fighter
 stood
 For his last fight, and, wiping treacher-
 ous blood

Out of the eyelids just held ope beneath
 Those shading fingers in their iron
 sheath,
 Steadied his strengths amid the buz
 and stir
 Of a dusk hideous amphitheatre
 At the announcement of his over-
 match
 To wind the day's diversion up,
 despatch
 Their pertinacious friend: while, limbs
 one heap,
 The Slave, no breath in her round
 mouth, watched leap
 Dart after dart forth as her hero's car
 Clove dizzily the solid of the war
 —Let coil about his knees for pride
 in him.
 We reach the farthest terrace and
 the grim
 San Pietro Palace stops us.
 Such the state
 Of Salinguerra's plan to emulate
 Sicilian marvels that his girlish wife
 Retrude still might lead her ancient life
 In her new home—whereat enlarged
 so much
 Neighbours upon the novel princely
 touch
 He took who here imprisons Boniface.
 Here must the Envoys come to sue
 for grace;
 And here, emerging from the laby-
 rinth
 Below, two minstrels pause beside the
 plinth
 Of the door-pillar.
 He had really left
 Verona for the cornfields (a poor theft
 From the morass) where Este's camp
 was made,
 The Envoys' march, the Legate's
 cavalcade—
 Looked cursorily o'er, but scarce as
 when,
 Eager for cause to stand aloof from men
 At every point save the fantastic tie
 Acknowledged in his boyish sophistry,
 He made account of such. A crowd;
 he meant
 To task the whole of it; each part's
 intent

Concerned him therefore, and the
 more he pried
 The less became Sordello satisfied
 With his own figure at the moment.
 Sought
 The respite from his task? desir'd he
 sought
 Novel in the anticipated sight
 Of all these lives upon all delight?
 A phalanx as of myriad points com-
 bined
 Whereby he still had imaged that
 mankind
 His youth was passed in dreams of
 rivalling,
 His age—in plans to show at least
 the thing
 So dreamed, but now he hastened
 to impress
 With his own will, effect a happiness
 From theirs,—supply a body to his
 soul
 Thence, and become eventually whole
 With them as he had hoped to be with-
 out—
 Made these the mankind he was mad
 about?
 Because a few of them were notable
 Must all be figured worthy note? As
 well
 Expect to find Taurello's triple line
 Of trees a single and prodigious pine,
 And pines rose here and there, but,
 close among,
 Thrust into and mixed up with pines,
 a throng
 Of shrubs you saw, a nameless common
 sort
 O'erpass in dreams, left out of the
 report,
 Fast hurried into corners, or at best
 Admitted to be fancied like the rest.
 Reckon that morning's proper chiefs:
 how few!
 And yet the people grew, the people
 grew,
 grew ever, as with many there in-
 deed,
 More left behind and most who
 should succeed
 Simply in virtue of their faces, eyes,
 Petty enjoyments and huge miseries,

Were veritably mingled with, made
 great
 Those chiefs: no overlooking Main-
 ard's state
 Nor Concorezzi's station, but instead
 Of stopping there, each dwindled to
 be head
 Of infinite and absent Tyrolean
 Or Padaans; starting too the more
 that the
 Seemed passive and disposed of, un-
 cared for
 Yet doubtless on the whole (quoth
 Eglaamor)
 Smiling—for if a wealthy man decays
 And out of store of such must wear
 all days,
 One tattered suit alike in sun and
 shade,
 'Tis commonly some tarnished fine
 brocade
 Fit for a feast-night's flourish and no
 more;
 Nor otherwise poor Misery from her
 store
 Of looks is fain upgather, keep unfurled
 For common wear as she goes through
 the world
 The faint remainder of some worn-
 out smile
 Meant for a feast-night's service
 merely. While
 Crowd upon crowd rose on Sordello
 thus,—
 Crowds no way interfering to discuss
 Much less dispute life's joys with one
 employed
 In envying them, or, if they enjoyed,
 There lingered somewhat indefinable
 In every look and tone, the mirth as
 well
 As woe, that fixed at once his estimate
 Of the result, their good or bad
 estate—
 Old memories flocked but with new
 effect:
 And the new body, ere he could sus-
 pect,
 Cohered, mankind and he were really
 fused,
 The new self seemed impatient to be
 used

By him, but utterly another way
 Than that anticipated : strange to say,
 They were too much below him, more
 in thrall
 Than he, the adjunct than the principal.
 What booted's scattered brilliances?
 the mind
 Of any number he might hope to bind
 And stamp with his own thought,
 howe'er august,
 If all the rest should grovel in the
 dust?
 No : first a mighty equilibrium sure
 To be established, privilege procure
 For them himself had long possessed !
 he felt
 An error, an exceeding error melt —
 While he was occupied with Mantuan
 chants
 Behoved him think of men and of
 their wants
 Such as he now distinguished every
 side,
 As his own want that might be
 satisfied,
 And, after that, of wondrous qualities
 Of his own soul demanding exercise,
 And like demand it longer, nor a
 claim
 On their part, nor was virtue in the aim
 At serving them on his, but, past re-
 trieve,
 He in their toils felt with them, nor
 could leave,
 Wonder that in the eagerness to rule,
 Impress his will upon them, he the
 fool,
 Had never entertained the obvious
 thought
 This last of his arrangements would
 be fraught
 With good to them as well, and he
 should be
 Rejoiced thereof : and if, as formerly,
 He sighed the merry time of life must
 flee,
 'Twas deeper now, for could the
 crowds repeat
 Their poor experiences? His hand
 that shook
 Was twice to be deplored. The
 Legate, look !

With eyes, like fresh-blown thrush-
 eggs on a thread,
 Faint-blue and loosely floating in his
 head,
 Large tongue, moist open mouth ;
 and this long while
 That owner of the idiotic smile
 Serves them ! He fortunately saw in
 time
 His fault however, and the office prime
 Includes the secondary—best accept
 Both offices ; Taurello is adept
 Could teach him the preparatory one,
 And how to do what he had fancied
 done
 Long previously, ere take the greater
 task.
 How render then these people happy?
 ask
 The people's friends : for there must
 be one good,
 One way to it—the Cause ! he under-
 stood
 The meaning now of Palma ; else
 why are
 The great ado, the trouble wide and far,
 These Guelfs and Ghibellins, the
 Lombard's hope
 Or its despair ! 'twixt Emperor or
 Pope
 The confused shag sort of Eden
 tale —
 Of hardihood recurring still to fail —
 That foreign interloping fiend, this free
 And native overbrooding Deity —
 Yet a dire fascination o'er the palms
 His presence ruined troubling through
 the calms
 Of Paradise — or, on the other hand,
 The Pontiff, as your Kaisers under-
 stand,
 That, snake-like cursed of God to love
 the ground,
 With lulling eye breaks in the noon
 profound
 Some saving tree—who but the Kaiser
 drest
 As the dislodging angel of the pest
 Than yet that pest bedropt, flat head,
 full fold,
 With coruscating dower of dyes ; be-
 hold

The secret, so to speak, and master
spring

Of the whole contest ! which of them
shall bring

Men good—perchance the most good
—ay, it may

Be that ; the question is which knows
the way.

And hereupon Count Mainard
strutted past

Out of San Pietro : never looked the
last

Of archers, slingers ; and our friend
began

To recollect strange modes of serving
man—

Arbalist, catapult, brake, manganel,
And more : this way of theirs may,
who can tell,

Need perfecting, said he : all's better
solved

At once : Taurello 'twas the task de-
volved

On late—confront Taurello
And at last

They did confront him. Scarcely an
hour past

When forth Sordello came, older by
years

Than at his entry. Unexampled fears
Oppressed him, and he staggered off,
blind, mute

And deaf, like some fresh-mutilated
brute,

Into Ferrara—not the empty town
That morning witnessed : he went
up and down

Streets whence the veil was stripped
shred after shred,

So that in place of huddling with
their dead

He doors to answer Salinguerra's ends,
His folk make shift to crawl and sit
like friends

With any one. A woman gave him
choice

Of her two daughters, the infantile
voice

Or dimpled knee, for half a chain his
throat

Was clasped with ; but an archer knew
the coat—

Its blue cross and eight lilies, bade
beware

One dogging him in concert with the
air

Though thrumming on the sleeve that
hid his knife.

Night set in early, autumn dew fell
rife.

And fires were kindled while the
Leaguers' mass

Began at every carroch—he must pass
Between that kneeling people : pre-
sently

The carroch of Verona caught his eye
With purple trappings ; silently he
bent

Over its fire, when voices violent
Began, Affirm not whom the youth
was like

That, striking from the porch, I did
not strike

Again ; I too have chesnut hair ; my
kin

Hate Azzo and stand up for Ecelin ;
Here, minstrel, drive bad thoughts
away ; sing ; take

My glove for guerdon ! and for that
man's sake

He turned : A song of Eglamor's !
scarce named,

When, Our Sordello's rather ! all ex-
claimed ;

Is not Sordello famous st for rhyme ;
He had been happy to deny, this
time ;

Profess as heretofore the aching head,
The failing heart ; suspect that in his
stead

Some true Apollo had the charge of
them,

Was champion to reward or to con-
demn

So his intolerable risk might shift
Or share itself ; but Naddo's precious
gift

Of gifts returned, be certain ! at the
close —

I made that, said he to a youth who
rose

As if to hear : 'twas Palma through
the band

Conducted him in silence by the hand.

Back now for Salinguerra. Tito
 of Trent
 Gave place, remember, to the pair :
 who went
 In turn at Montelungo's visit one
 After the other are they come and
 gone.
 A drear vast presence-chamber
 roughly set
 In order for this morning's use ; you
 met
 The grim black two-necked eagle,
 coarsely flaked
 With ochre on the naked wall, nor
 lacked
 There green and yellow tokens either
 side :
 But the new symbol Tito brought had
 tried
 The Legate's patience -nay, if Palma
 knew
 What Salinguerra almost meant to do
 Until the sight of her restored his lip
 A certain half-smile three months'
 chieftainship
 Had banished ! Afterward the Legate
 found
 No change in him, nor asked what
 badge he wound
 And unwound carelessly ! Now sate
 the Chief
 Silent as when our couple left whose
 brief
 Encounter wrought so opportune effect
 In thoughts he summoned not, nor
 would reject
 Though time if ever, 'twas to pause
 now -fix
 On any sort of ending : wiles and
 tricks
 Exhausted, judge ! his charge, the
 crazy town,
 Just managed to be hindered crashing
 down—
 His last sound troops ranged -care
 observed to post
 His last of the maimed soldiers inner-
 most—
 So much was plain enough, but some-
 how struck
 Him not before : and now with this
 strange luck

Of Tito's news, rewarding his ad-
 dress
 So well, what thought he of ? How
 the success
 With Friedrich's rescript there, would
 either hush
 Ecelin's fiercest scruples up, or doth
 Young Ecelin's white cheek, or, last,
 exempt
 Himself from telling what there was
 to tempt ;
 No : that this minstrel was Romano's
 last
 Servant—himself the first ! Could !
 contrast
 The whole ! that minstrel's thirty
 autumns spent
 In doing nought, his notablest event
 This morning's journey hither, as we
 told—
 Who yet was lean, outworn and really
 old,
 A stammering awkward youth (scarce
 dared he raise
 His eye before that magisterial gaze
 -And Salinguerra with his fears and
 hopes
 Of sixty years, his Emperors and
 Popes,
 Cares and contrivances, yet you would
 say
 A youth 'twas nonchalantly looked
 away
 Through the embrasure northward
 o'er the sick
 Expostulating trees—so agile quick
 And graceful turned the head on the
 broad chest
 Encased in pliant steel, his constant
 vest,
 Whence split the sun off in a spray of
 fire
 Across the room ; and, loosened of
 its tire
 Of steel, that head let see the comely
 brown
 Large massive locks discoloured as a
 crown
 Encircled them, so frayed the basnet
 where
 A sharp white line divided clean the
 hair ;

Glossy above, glossy below, swept
Curling and fine about a brow thus kept
laid coat upon coat, marble and
found :

us was the mystic mark the Tuscan
found.

Mused of, turned over books about.
Square-faced,

No lion more ; two vivid eyes, en-
chased

In hollows filled with many a shade
and streak

Settling from the bold nose and
bearded cheek ;

Nor might the half-smile reach them
that deformed

A lip supremely perfect else—un-
warmed,

Unwidened, less or more ; indifferent
Whether on trees or men his thoughts
were bent—

Thoughts rarely, after all, in trim and
train

As now : a period was fulfilled again ;
Such in a series made his life, com-
pressed

In each, one story serving for the
rest—

Therefore he smiled. Beyond stretched
garden-grounds

Where late the adversary, breaking
bounds,

Procured him an occasion That above,
That eagle, testified he could improve
Effectually ; the Kaiser's symbol lay
Beside his rescript, a new badge by
way

Of baldric ; while another thing that
marred

Alike emprise, achievement and re-
ward,

Ecclin's missive was conspicuous too.

What a past life those flying
thoughts pursue !

As his no name in Mantua half so old ;
But at Ferrara, where his sires enrolled

It latterly, the Adelardi spared
Few means to rival them : both

factions shared
Ferrara, so that, counted out, 'twould
yield

A product very like the city's shield,

Half black and white, or Ghibelin and
Gu.

As after Salinguerra styled himself
And Este who, till Marchesalla died

Last of the Adelardi, never tried
His fortune there ; but Marchesalla's
child

Transmits (can Blacks and Whites be
reconciled

And young Taurello wed Linguetta)
wealth

And sway to a sole grasp : each treats
by stealth

Already : when the Guelfs, the
Ravennese

Arrive, assault the Pietro quarter, seize
Linguetta, and are gone ! Our first
dismay

Abated somewhat, hurries down to lay
The after indignation Boniface,

No meaner spokesman : Learn the
full disgrace

Averted ere you blame us—wont to rate
Your Salinguerra, and sole potentate

That might have been, 'mongst Este's
valvassors—

Ay, Azzo's—who, not privy to, abhors
Our step—but we were zealous.

Azzo's then
To do with ! Straight a meeting of
old men :

The Lombard Eagle of the azure
sphere

With Italy to build in, builds he here ?
This deemed—the other owned upon

advice—
A third reflected on the matter twice—

In fine, young Salinguerra's staunchest
friends

Talked of the townsmen making him
amends,

Gave him a goshawk, and affirmed
there was

Rare sport, one morning, over the
morass

A mile or so. He sauntered through
the plain,

Was restless, fell to thinking, turned
again

In time for Azzo's entry with the bride ;
Count Boniface rode smirking at his

side ;

There's half Ferrara with her, whis-
pers flew,
And all Ancona! If the stripling
knew!
Anon the stripling was in Sicily
Where Heinrich ruled in right of
Constance; he
Was gracious nor his guest incapable;
Each understood the other. So it fell,
One Spring, when Azzo, thoroughly
at ease,
Had near forgotten what precise
degrees
He crept by into such a downy seat,
Over the Count trudged in a special
heat
To bid him of God's love dislodge
from each
Of Salinguerra's Palaces; a breach
Might yawn else not so readily to shut,
For who was just arrived at Mantua but
The youngster, sword on thigh, tuft
upon chin,
With tokens for Celano, Ecelin,
Pistore and the like! Next news: no
whit
Do any of Ferrara's domes befit
His wife of Heinrich's very blood: a
band
Of foreigners assemble, understand
Garden-constructing, level and sur-
round,
Build up and bury in. A last news
crowned
The consternation: since his infant's
birth
He only waits they end his wondrous
girth
Of trees that link San Pietro with Tomà
To visit us. When, as its Podestà
Regaled him at Vicenza, Este, there
With Boniface beforehand, each aware
Of plots in progress, gave alarm, ex-
pelled
A party which abetted him, but yelled
Too hastily. The burning and the
flight,
And how Taurello, occupied that night
With Ecelin, lost wife and son, were
told:
—Not how he bore the blow, retained
his hold.

Got friends safe through, left enemies
the worst
O' the fray, and hardly seemed to care
at first—
But afterward you heard not constantly
Of Salinguerra's House so sure to be!
Though Azzo simply gained by the
event
A shifting of his plagues—this one
content
To fall behind the other and estrange,
You will not say, his nature, but so
change
That in Romano sought he wife and
child,
And for Romano's sake was reconciled
To losing individual life, deep sunk,
A very pollard mortised in a trunk
Which Arabs out of wantonness con-
trive
Shall dwindle that the alien stock may
thrive
Till forth that vine-palm feathers to
the root,
And red drops moisten them its arid
fruit.
Once set on Adelaide, the subtle mate
And wholly at his beck, to emulate
The Church's valiant women deed for
deed,
To paragon her namesake, win the
meed
Of its Matilda, and they overbore
The rest of Lombardy—not as before
By an instinctive truculence, but
patched
The Kaiser's strategy until it matched
The Pontiff's, sought old ends by novel
means:
Only, Romano Salinguerra screens.
Heinrich was somewhat of the tardiest
To comprehend, nor Philip acquiesced
At once in the arrangement; reasoned,
plied
His friend with offers of another bride,
A statelier function—fruitlessly; 'tis
plain
Taurello's somehow one to let re-
main
Obscure and Otho, free to judge of
both,
—Ecelin the unready, harsh and loth,

And this more plausible and facile
 wight
 With every point a-sparkle—chose the
 right,
 Admiring how his predecessors harped
 On the wrong man : thus, quoth he,
 wits are warped
 By outsides ! Carelessly, withal, his life
 Suffered its many turns of peace and
 strife
 In many lands—you hardly could
 surprise
 A man who shamed Sordello (recog-
 nise)
 In this as much beside, that, uncon-
 cerned,
 What qualities are natural or earned,
 With no ideal of graces, as they came
 He took them, singularly well the
 same—
 Speaking a dozen languages, because
 Your Greek eludes you, leave the
 least of flaws
 In contracts ; while, through Arab
 lore, deter
 Who may the Tuscan, once Jove
 trined for her,
 From Friedrich's path ! Friedrich,
 whose pilgrimage
 The same man puts aside, whom he'll
 engage
 To leave next year John Brienne in
 the lurch,
 And see Bassano for Saint Francis'
 church
 Profound on Guido the Bolognian's
 piece
 That, if you lend him credit, rivals
 Greece
 Angels, with aureoles like golden
 quoits
 Pitched home, applauding Ecelin's
 exploits
 In Painimrie. He strung the angelot ;
 Made rhymes thereto ; for prowess,
 clove he not
 Tiso, last siege, from crest to crupper ?
 why
 Detail you thus a varied mastery
 But that Taurello, ever on the watch
 For men, to read their hearts and
 thereby catch

Their capabilities and purposes,
 Displayed him. If so far as displayed
 these :
 While our Sordello only cared to know
 About men as a means for him to show
 Himself, and men were much or little
 worth
 According as they kept in or drew
 forth
 That self ; the other's choicest instru-
 ments
 Surmised him shallow. Meantime
 malcontents
 Dropped off, town after town grew
 wiser ; how
 Change the world's face ? said people :
 as 'tis now
 It has been, will be ever : very fine
 Subjecting things profane to things
 divine
 In talk : this contumacy will fatigue
 The vigilance of Este and the League,
 Observe ! accordingly, their basement
 sapped,
 Azzo and Boniface were soon en-
 trapped
 By Ponte Alto, and in one month's
 space
 Slept at Verona : either left a brace
 Of sons—so three years after, either's
 pair
 Lost Guglielm and Aldobrand its heir :
 Azzo remained and Richard—all the
 stay
 Of Este and St. Boniface, at bay
 As 'twere ; when either Ecelin grew
 old
 Or his brain altered—not the prop-
 er mould
 For new appliances—his old palm stock
 Endured no influx of strange strengths :
 he'd rock
 As in a drunkenness, or chuckle low
 As proud of the completeness of his
 woe,
 Then weep—real tears ! Now make
 some mad onslaught
 On Este, heedless of the lesson taught
 So painfully—now cringe, sue peace,
 but peace
 At price of all advantage ; therefore
 cease

The fortunes of Romano ! Up at last
 Rose Este and Romano sank as fast,
 And men remarked this sort of peace
 and war
 Commenced while Salinguerra was
 afar :
 And every friend besought him, but
 in vain,
 To wait his old adherent, call again.
 Taurello : not he !—who had daughters,
 sons,
 Could plot himself, nor needed any
 one's
 Advice. 'Twas Adelaide's remaining
 staunch
 Prevented his destruction root and
 branch
 Forthwith ; Goito grew green above
 her, gay
 He made alliances, gave lands away
 To whom it pleased accept them, and
 withdrew
 For ever from the world. Taurello,
 who
 Was summoned to the convent, then
 refused
 A word—however patient, thus abused,
 At Este's mercy through his imbecile
 Ally, was fain dismiss the foolish smile,
 And a few movements of the happier
 sort
 Changed matters, put himself in men's
 report
 As heretofore ; he had to fight, beside,
 And that became him ever. So in
 pride
 And flushing of this kind of second
 youth
 He dealt a good-will blow : Este in
 truth
 Was prone—and men remembered,
 somewhat late,
 A laughing old outrageous stifled hate
 He bore that Este—how it would out-
 break
 At times spite of disguise, like an
 earthquake
 In sunny weather—as that noted day
 When with his hundred friends he
 offered slay
 Azzo before the Kaiser's face : and how
 On Azzo's calm refusal to allow

A liegeman's challenge straight he too
 was calmed :
 His hate, no doubt, would bear to lie
 embalmed,
 Bicked up, the moody Pharaoh, to
 survive
 All intermediate crumbings, be alive
 At earth's catastrophe—'twas Este's
 crash
 Not Azzo's he demanded, so no ra-h
 Procedure ! Este's true antagonist
 Rose out of Ecelin : all voices whist,
 All eyes were sharpened, wit pre-
 dicted. He
 'Twas leaned in the embrasure pre-
 sently,
 Amused with his own efforts, now, to
 trace
 With his steel-sheathed forefinger
 Friedrich's face
 I' the dust : and as the trees waved
 sere, his smile
 Deepened, and words expressed its
 thought erewhile.
 Ay, fairly housed at last, my old
 compeer ?
 That we should stick together all the
 year
 I kept Vicenza !—How old Boniface,
 Old Azzo caught us in its market-place,
 He by that pillar, I this pillar, each
 In mid swing, more than fury of his
 speech,
 Egging our rabble on to disavow
 Allegiance to the Marquis—Bacchus,
 how
 They caught us ! Ecelin must turn
 their drudge ;
 Nor, if released, will Salinguerra
 grudge
 Paying arrears of tribute due long
 since—
 Bacchus ! My man, could promise
 then, nor wince,
 The bones-and-muscles ! sound of
 wind and limb,
 Spoke he the set excuse I framed for
 him ;
 And now he sits me, slaving and
 mute,
 Intent on chafing each starved purple
 foot

Benumbed past aching with the altar
 slab
 Will no vein throb there when some
 monk shall blab
 Spitefully to the circle of bald scalps
 Friedrich's affirmed to be our side the
 Alps
 Eh, brotl'r Lactance, brother Ana-
 clet?
 Sworn to abjure the world and the
 world's fret,
 God's own now? drop the dormitory
 bar,
 Enfold the scanty grey serge scapular
 Twice o'er the cowl to muffle memories
 out—
 So! but the midnight whisper turns a
 shout,
 Eyes wink, mouths open, pulses cir-
 culate
 In the stone walls: the past, the
 world you hate
 Is with you, ambush, openfield—or see
 The surging flame—they fire Vicenza
 —glee!
 Follow, let Pilio and Bernardi chafe—
 Bring up the Mantuans—through San
 Biagio safe!
 Ah, the mad people waken? Ah,
 they writhe
 And reach you? if they block the
 gate—no tithe
 Can pass—keep back you Bassanese!
 the edge,
 Use the edge—shear, thrust, hew,
 melt down the wedge,
 Let out the black of those black up-
 turned eyes!
 Hell—are they sprinkling fire too?
 the blood fries
 And hisses on your brass gloves as
 they tear
 Those upturned faces choaking with
 despair.
 Brave! Slidder through the reeking
 gate—how now?
 You six had charge of her? And
 then the vow
 Comes, and the foam spirts, hair's
 plucked, till one shriek
 (I hear it) and you fling—you cannot
 speak—

Your gold-flowered basnet to a man
 who haled
 The Adelaide he dared scarce view
 unveiled
 This morn, naked across the fire:
 how crown
 The archer that exhausted lays you
 down
 Your infant, smiling at the flame, and
 dies?
 While one, while mine . . .
 Bacchus! I think there lies
 More than one corpse there (and he
 paced the room)
 —Another cinder somewhere—'twas
 my doom
 Beside, my doom: if Adelaide is dead
 I am the same, this Azzo lives instead
 Of that to me, and we pull any how
 Este into a heap—the matter's now
 At the true juncture slipping us so oft;
 Ay, Heinrich died and Otho, please
 you, doffed
 His crown at such a juncture: let but
 hold
 Our Friedrich's purpose, let this chain
 enfold
 The neck of . . . who but this same
 Ecelin?
 That must recoil when the best days
 begin—
 Recoil? that's nought; if the recoiler
 leaves
 His name for me to fight with, no one
 grieves!
 But he must interfere, forsooth, unlock
 His clo'r to become my stumbling-
 block
 Just as of old! Ay, ay, there 'tis
 again
 The land's inevitable Head—explain
 The reverences that subject us! Count
 These Ecelins now! not to say as
 fount,
 Originating power of thought, from
 twelve
 That drop i' the trenches they joined
 hands to delve
 Six shall surpass him, but . . . why,
 men must twine
 Somehow with something! Ecelin's
 a fine

Clear name! 'Twere simpler, doubt-
 less, twine with me
 At once: our cloistered friend's cap-
 acity
 Was of a sort! I had to share myself
 In fifty portions, like an o'ertasked elf
 That's forced illumine in fifty points
 the vast
 Rare vapour he's environed by: at
 last
 My strengths, though sorely frittered,
 e'en converge
 And crown--no, Bacchus, they have
 yet to urge
 The man be crowned!
 That aloe, an he durst,
 Would climb! just such a bloated
 sprawler first
 I noted in Messina's castle court
 The day I came, and Heinrich asked
 in sport
 If I would pledge my faith to win
 him back
 His right in Lombardy; for, once
 bid pack
 Marauders, he continued, in my stead
 You rule, Taurello! and upon this
 head
 Laid the silk glove of Constance-- I
 see her
 Too, mantled head to foot in miniver,
 Retrude following!
 I am absolved
 From further toil: the empery de-
 volved
 On me, 'twas Tito's word: and think,
 to lay
 For once my plan, pursue my plan my
 way,
 Prompt nobody, and render an
 account
 Taurello to Taurello! nay, I mount
 To Friedrich--he conceives the post
 I kept,
 Who did true service, able or inept,
 Who's worthy guerdon, Ecelin or I:
 Me guerdoned, counsel follows; would
 he vie
 With the Pope really? Azzo, Boni-
 face
 Compose a right-arm Hohenstauffen's
 race

Must break ere govern Lombardy; I
 point
 How easy 'twere to twist, once out of
 joint,
 The socket from the bone; my Azzo's
 stare
 Meanwhile! for I, this idle strap to
 wear,
 Shall--fret myself abundantly, what
 end
 To serve? There's left me twenty
 years to spend
 How better than my old way?
 Had I one
 Who laboured overthrow my work
 a son
 Hatching with Azzo superb treachery,
 To root my pines up and then poison me.
 Suppose--'twere worth while frustrate
 that! Beside
 Another life's ordained me: the
 world's tide
 Rolls, and what hope of parting from
 the press
 Of waves, a single wave through
 weariness
 That's gently led aside, laid upon
 shore?
 My life must be lived out in foam and
 roar,
 No question. Fifty years the province
 held
 Taurello; troubles raised, and troubles
 quelled,
 He in the midst--who leaves this
 quaint stone place,
 Those trees a year or two, then, not
 a trace
 Of him! How obtain hold, fetter
 men's tongues
 Like that Sordello with the foolish
 songs--
 To which, despite our bustle, he is
 linked?
 --Flowers one may tease, that never
 seem extinct;
 Ay, that patch, surely, green as ever,
 where
 I set Her Moorish lentisk, by the stair,
 To overawe the aloes-- and we trod
 Those flowers, how call you such?
 into the sod;

A stately foreigner—and worlds of
 pain
 To make it thrive, arrest rough winds
 —all vain!
 It would decline—these would not be
 destroyed—
 And now, where is it? where can you
 avoid
 The flowers? I frighten children
 twenty years
 Longer!—which way, too, Ecelin
 appears
 To thwart me, for his son's besotted
 youth
 Gives promise of the proper tiger-tooth,
 They prattle, at Vicenza! Fate, fate,
 fate,
 My fine Taurello! go you, promulgate
 Friedrich's decree, and here's shall
 aggrandise
 Young Ecelin—our Prefect's badge!
 a prize
 Too precious, certainly.
 How now? Compete
 With my old comrade? shuffle from
 their seat
 His children? Paltry dealing! don't
 I know
 Ecelin? now, I think, and years
 ago!
 What's changed—the weakness? did
 not I compound
 For that, and undertake preserve him
 sound
 Despite it? Say Taurello's hankering
 After the boy's preferment— this play-
 thing
 To carry Bacchus! And he laughed.
 Remark
 Why schemes wherein cold-blooded
 men embark
 Prosper, when your enthusiastic sort
 Fails— while these last are ever stop-
 ping short—
 (Much to be done—so little they can
 do!)
 The careless tribe see nothing to
 pursue
 Should they desist: meantime their
 scheme succeeds.
 Thoughts were caprices in the
 course of deeds

Methodic with Taurello; so he turned,
 Enough amused by fancies fairly
 earned
 Of Este's horror-struck submitted neck,
 And Boniface completely at his beck,
 To his own petty but immediate doubt
 If he could pacify the League without
 Conceding Richard; just to this was
 brought
 That interval of vain discursive
 thought!
 As, shall I say, some Ethiop, past
 pursuit
 Of all enslavers, dips a shackled foot,
 Burnt to the blood, into the drowsy
 black
 Enormous water current, his sole track
 To his own tribe again, where he is
 King;
 And laughs because he guesses,
 numbering
 The yellower poison-wattles on the
 pouch
 Of the first lizard wrested from its
 couch
 Under the slime (whose skin, the
 while, he strips
 To cure his nostril with, and festered
 lips,
 And eyeballs bloodshot through the
 desert blast)
 That he has reached its boundary, at
 last
 May breathe;—thinks o'er enchant-
 ments of the South
 Sovereign to plague his enemies, their
 mouth,
 And nails, and hair; but, these en-
 chantments tried
 In fancy, puts them soberly aside
 For truth, cool projects a return with
 friends,
 The likelihood of winning wild
 amends
 Ere long; thinks that, takes comfort
 silently,
 And, from the river's brink, his
 wrongs and he,
 Hugging revenge close to their hearts,
 are soon
 Off-striding for the Mountains of the
 Moon.

Midnight : the watcher nodded on
 his spear,
 Since clouds dispersing left a passage
 clear,
 If any meagre and discoloured moon
 Should venture forth ; and such was
 peering soon
 Above the harassed city—her close
 lanes
 Closer, not half so tapering her fanes,
 As though she shrunk into herself to
 keep
 What little life was saved more safely.
 Heap
 By heap the watch-fires mouldered,
 and beside
 The blackest spoke Sordello and replied
 Palma with none to listen. "Tis your
 Cause
 What makes a Ghibellin? There
 should be laws
 (Remember how my youth escaped !
 I trust
 To you for manhood, Palma ; tell me
 just
 As any child) - laws secretly at work
 Explaining this. Assure me good
 may lurk
 Under the bad ; my multitude has part
 In your designs, their welfare is at
 heart
 With Salinguerra, to their interest
 Refer the deeds he dwelt on—so divest
 Our conference of much that scared
 me : why
 Affect that heartless tone to Tito ? I
 Esteemed myself, yes, in my inmost
 mind
 This morn, a recreant to that wide
 mankind
 O'erlooked till now : why boast my
 spirit's force.
 That force denied its object ? why
 divorce
 These, then admire my spirit's flight
 the same,
 As though it bore a burden which
 could tame
 No pinion, from dead void to living
 space ?
 -That orb consigned to chaos and
 disgrace,

Why vaunt complacently my frantic
 dance,
 Making a feat, facilities enhance
 The marvel? But I front Taurello, one
 Of happier fate, and what I should
 have done
 He does ; the multitude aye paramount
 With him, its making progress may
 account
 For his abiding still : when—but you
 heard
 His talk with Tito— the excuse pre-
 ferred
 For burning those five hostages—and
 breached
 By way of blind, as you and I ap-
 proached,
 I do believe.
 She spoke : then he, My thought
 Plainer expressed ! All Friedrich's
 profit—nought
 Of these meantime, of conquests to
 achieve
 For them, of wretchednesses to relieve
 While profiting that Friedrich. Azzo,
 too,
 Supports a cause : what is it ? Guelfs
 pursue
 Their ends by means like yours, or
 better ?
 When
 The Guelfs were shown alike, men
 ranged with men,
 And deed with deed, blaze, blood,
 with blood and blaze,
 Morn broke : once more, Sordello,
 meet its gaze
 Proudly—the people's charge against
 thee fails
 In every point, while either party
 quails !
 These are the busy ones—be silent
 thou !
 Two parties take the world up, and
 allow
 No third, yet have one principle,
 subsist
 By the same method ; whoso shall
 enlist
 With either, ranks with man's in-
 veterate foes.
 So there is one less quarrel to compose

Twixt us: the Guelph's, the Ghibellin's
 to curse—
 I have done nothing, but both sides
 do worse
 Than nothing; nay to me, forgotten,
 left
 Of insight, lapped by trees and
 flowers, was let
 The notion of a service left. What
 lured
 Me here, what mighty art was I assured
 Moved Salinqueria? What a Cause
 remained
 Intact, distinct from these, and fate
 ordained,
 For all the past, that Cause for me?
 One pressed
 Before them here, a watcher, to suggest
 The subject for a ballad: He must
 know
 The tale of the dead worthy, long ago
 Consul of Rome—that's long ago for
 us,
 Minstrels and bowmen, idly squab-
 bling thus
 In the world's corners— but too late,
 no doubt,
 For the brave time he sought to bring
 about
 Not know Crescentius Nomentanus?
 Then
 He cast about for terms to tell him,
 when
 Sordello disavowed it, how they used
 Whenever their Superior introduced
 A novice to the Brotherhood—for I
 Was just a brown-sleeve brother,
 merrily
 Appointed too, quoth he, till Innocent
 Bled me relinquish, to my small con-
 tent,
 My wife or my brown sleeves) out
 some one spoke
 The nocturns of Crescentius, to revoke
 The edict issued after his death—
 That blotted memory, and effigies,
 About except a floating word in mine
 Leading, tending to produce the same
 Great act. Rome, dead, forgotten,
 lived at heart
 Within that man, though to a vulgar
 priest

And a vile stranger, fit to be a slave
 Of Rome's, Pope John, King Otho,
 for me gave
 The rule there: but Crescentius, haply
 drest
 In white, called Roman Consul for a
 jest,
 Taking the people at their word, forth
 stept
 As upon Brutus' heel, nor ever kept
 Us waiting; stept he forth and from
 his brain
 Gave Rome out on its ancient place
 again,
 Ay, bade proceed with Brutus' Rome
 kings styled
 Themselves the citizens of, and, be-
 guiled
 Thereby, were fain select the lustrous
 gem
 Out of a lapfull, spoil their diadem
 The Senate's cypher was so hard to
 scratch!
 He flashes like a phalanx, men too
 catch
 The flame, and Rome's accomplished;
 when returned
 Otho and John the Consul's step had
 spurned,
 And Hugo Lord of Este, to redress
 The wrongs of each. Crescentius in
 the stress
 Of adverse fortune bent. They cruci-
 fied
 Their Consul in the Forum and abide
 Such slaves at Rome e'er since, that I
 (for I
 Was once a brown-sleeve brother,
 merrily
 Appointed) - I had option to keep wife
 Or keep brown sleeves, and managed
 in the strife
 Love both. A song of Rome!
 And Rome, indeed,
 Looked at Goito in fantastic weed,
 The Mother-City of his Mantuan day,
 Looked an established point of light
 whence rays
 Traversed the world: and all the
 clustered homes
 Beside of men were bent on being
 Romes

In their degree; the question was
 how each
 Should most resemble Rome, clean
 out of reach
 Herself; nor struggled either principle
 To change what it aspired possess—
 Rome, still
 For Friedrich or Honorius.
 Rome's the Cause!
 The Rome of the old Pandects, our
 new laws—
 The Capitol turned Castle Angelo
 And structures that inordinately glow
 Corrected by the Theatre forlorn
 As a black mundane shell, its world
 late born
 —Verona, that's beside it. These
 combined,
 We typify the scheme to put mankind
 Once more in full possession of their
 rights
 By his sole agency. On me it lights
 To build up Rome again—me, first
 and last:
 For such a Future was endured the
 Past!
 And thus in the grey twilight forth he
 sprung
 To give his thought consistency among
 The People's self, and let their truth
 avail
 Finish the dream grown from the
 archer's tale.

BOOK THE FIFTH

Is it the same Sordello in the dusk
 As at the dawn? merely a perished husk
 Now, that arose a power like to build
 Up Rome again? The proud concep-
 tion chilled
 So soon? Ay, watch that latest
 dream of thine
 —A Rome indebted to no Palatine.
 Drop arch by arch, Sordello! Art
 possesst
 Of thy wish now—rewarded for thy
 quest
 To-day among Ferrara's squalid sons—
 Are this and this and this the shining
 ones

Meet for the Shining City? Sooth to
 say
 Our favoured tenantry pursue their
 way
 After a fashion! This companion
 slips
 On the smooth causey, t'other blinkard
 trips
 At his mooned sandal. Leave to lead
 the brawls
 Here i' the atria? No, friend. He
 that sprawls
 On aught but a stibadium suffers . . .
 goose,
 Puttest our lustral vase to such an
 use?
 Oh, huddle up the day's disasters—
 march
 Ye runagates, and drop thou, arch by
 arch,
 Rome!
 Yet before they quite disband—a
 whim—
 Study a shelter, now, for him, and
 him,
 Nay, even him, to house them! any
 cave
 Suffices—throw out earth. A loop-
 hole? Brave!
 They ask to feel the sun shine, see the
 grass
 Grow, hear the lark sing? Dead art
 thou, alas,
 And I am dead! But here's our son
 excels
 At hurdle-weaving any Scythian, fells
 Oak and devises rafter-, dreams and
 shapes
 That dream into a door-post, just
 escapes
 The mystery of hinges. Lie we both
 Perdue another age. The goodly
 growth
 Of brick and stone! Our building-
 pelt was rough,
 But that descendant's garb suits well
 enough
 A portico-contriver. Speed the years—
 What's time to us? and lo, a city rears
 Itself! nay, enter—what's the grave
 to us?
 So, our forlorn acquaintance carry thus

The head ! successively sewer, forum,
cirque—
Last age that aqueduct was counted
work,
And now they tire the artificer upon
Blank alabaster, black obsidian,
—Careful Jove's face be duly fulgorant,
And mother Venus' kiss-creased
nipples pant
Back into pristine pulpiness, ere fixed
Above the baths. What difference
betwixt
This Rome and ours ? Resemblance
what between
The scurvy dumb-show and the
pageant sheen—
These Romans and our rabble ? Rest
thy wit
And listen : step by step,—a work-
man fit
With each, nor too fit,—to one's task
one's time,—
No leaping o'er the petty to the prime,
When just the substituting osier lithe
for bulrushes, and after, wood for
withe
To further loam and roughcast work a
stage,
Exacts an architect, exacts an age,—
Nor tables of the Mauritanian tree
For men whose maple log's their
luxury,—
And Rome's accomplished ! Better
(say you) merge
At once all workmen in the demiurge,
All epochs in a life-time, and all
tasks
In one : undoubtedly the city basks
I' the day—while those you'd feast
there want the knack
Of keeping fresh-chalked gowns from
speck and brack,
Distinguish not your peacock from
your swan,
Or Mareotic juice from Cœcuban,
Nay sneer . . . enough ! 'twas happy
to conceive
Rome on a sudden, nor shall fate be-
reave
Us of that credit : for the rest, her
spite
Is an old story—serves us very right

For adding yet another to the dull
List of devices—things proved
beautiful
Could they be done, Sordello cannot
do.
He sate upon the terrace, plucked
and threw
The powdery aloë-cusps away, saw
shift
Rome's walls, and drop arch after
arch, and drift
Mist-like afar those pillars of all stripe,
Mounds of all majesty. Thou arche-
type,
Last of my dreams and loveliest, de-
part !
And then a low voice wound into
his heart :
Sordello (lower than a Pythoness
Conceding to a Lydian King's distress
The cause of his long error—one mis-
take
Of her past oracle) Sordello, wake !
Where is the vanity ? Why count
you, one
The first step with the last step ?
What is gone
Except that æry magnificence—
That last step you took first ? an
evidence
You were . . . no matter. Let those
glances fall !
This basis, this beginning step of all,
Which proves you one of us, is this
gone too ?
Pity to disconcert one versed as you
In fate's ill-nature, but its full extent
Eludes Sordello, even : the veil's rent,
Read the black writing—that collec-
tive man
Outstrips the individual ! Who began
The greatnesses you know ?—ay, your
own art
Shall serve us : put the poet's mines
apart—
Close with the poet—closer—what ?
a dim
Too plain form separates itself from
him ?
Alcama's song enmeshes the lulled
Isle,
Woven into the echoes left erewhile

Of Nina's, one soft web of song : no
 more
 Turning his name, flower-like o'er and
 o'er !
 An elder poet in the younger's place —
 Take Nina's strength — but lose
 Alcama's grace ?
 Each neutralizes each then ! gaze your
 fill :
 Search further and the past presents
 you still
 New Ninas, new Alcamas, time's mid-
 night
 Concluding,—better say its evenlight
 Of yesterday. You now, in this re-
 spect
 Of benefitting people (to reject
 The favour of your fearful ignorance
 A thousand phantasms eager to ad-
 vance,
 Refer you but to those within your
 reach)
 Were you the first who got, to use
 plain speech,
 The Multitude to be materialized ?
 That loose eternal unrest—who de-
 vised
 An apparition i' the midst ? the rout
 Who checked, the breathless ring who
 formed about
 That sudden flower ? Get round at
 any risk
 The gold-rough pointel, silver blazing
 disk
 O' the lily ! Swords across it !
 Reign thy reign
 And serve thy frolic service, Charle-
 magne !
 —The very child of over-joyousness,
 Unfeeling thence, strong therefore :
 Strength by stress
 Of Strength comes of a forehead con-
 fident,
 Two widened eyes expecting heart's
 content,
 A calm as out of just-quelled noise,
 nor swerves
 The ample cheek for doubt, in gracious
 curves
 Abutting on the upthrust nether lip—
 He wills, how should he doubt then ?
 Ages slip—

Was it Sordello pried into the work
 So far accomplished, and discovering
 lurk
 A company amid the other clans,
 Only distinct in priests for castellans
 And popes for suzerains (their rule
 confessed
 Its rule, their interest its interest,
 Living for sake of living—there an end,
 Wrapt in itself, no energy to spend
 In making adversaries or allies) ;
 Dived he into its capabilities
 And dared create out of that sect a soul
 Should turn the multitude, already
 whole,
 To some account ? Speak plainer !
 Is't so sure
 God's church lives by a King's in-
 vestiture ?
 Look to last step : a staggering—a
 shock—
 What's sand shall be demolished, but
 the rock
 Endures—a column of black fiery dust
 Blots heaven—woe, woe, 'tis prema-
 turely thrust
 Aside, that step !—the air clears—
 nought's erased
 Of the true outline ? Thus much is
 firm based—
 The other was a scaffold : see you
 stand
 Buttressed upon his mattock Hilde-
 brand
 Of the huge brain-mask welded ply
 o'er ply
 As in a forge ; it buries either eye
 White and extinct, that stupid brow ;
 teeth clenched,
 The neck's tight-corded, too, the chin
 deep-trenched,
 As if a cloud enveloped him while
 fought
 Under it all, grim prizers, thought
 with thought
 At dead-lock, agonizing he, until
 The victor thought leap radiant up,
 and Will,
 The slave with folded arms and droop-
 ing lids
 They fought for, lean forth flame-like
 as it bids.

—A root, the crippled mandrake of
the earth,
Thwarted and dwarfed and blasted in
its birth,
Be certain; fruit of suffering's ex-
cess,
Whence feeling, therefore stronger:
still by stress
Of Strength, work Knowledge! Full
three hundred years
For men to wear away in smiles and
tears
Between the two that nearly seem to
touch,
Observe you: quit one workman and
we clutch
Another, letting both their trains go
by—
The actors-out of either's policy,
Heinrich, on this hand, Otho, Bar-
baross,
May carry the Imperial crowns across,
Aix' Iron, Milan's Silver, and Rome's
Gold—
As Alexander, Innocent uphold
On that the Papal keys—but, link on
link,
Why is it neither chain betrays a
chink?
How coalesce the small and great?
Alack,
For one thrust forward, fifty such fall
back!
The couple there alone help Gregory
Hark—from the hermit Peter's thin
sad cry
At Claremont, yonder to the serf that
says
Friedrich's no liege of his while he
delays
Getting the Pope's curse off him!
The Crusade—
Or trick of breeding strength by other
aid
Than strength, is safe: hark—from
the wild harangue
Of Vimmercato, to the carroch's
clang
Yonder! The League—or trick of
turning strength
Against pernicious strength, is safe at
length:

Yet hark—from Mantuan Albert's
making cease
The fierce ones, to Saint Francis
preaching peace
Yonder! God's Truce—or trick to
supersede
The use of strength at all, is safe.
Indeed
We trench upon the future! Who
shall found
Next step, next age—trail plenteous
o'er the ground
Vine-like, produced by joy and sorrow,
whence
Unfeeling and yet feeling, strongest
thence:
Knowledge by stress of Knowledge is
it? No—
E'en were Sordello ready to forego
His work for this, 'twere overleaping
work
Some one must do before, howe'er it
irk:
No end's in sight yet of that second
road:
Who means to help must still support
the load
Hildebrand 'fted—why hast Thou,
he groaned,
Imposed, my God, a thing thy Paul
had moaned,
And Moses failed beneath, on me?
and yet
That grandest of the tasks God ever set
On man left much to do: a mighty
wrench—
The scaffold falls—but half the pillars
blench
Merely, start back again—perchance
have been
Taken for buttresses: crash every
screen,
Hammer the tenons better, and engage
A gang about your work, for the next
age
Or two, of Knowledge, part by
Strength and part
By Knowledge! then—ay, then per-
chance may start
Sordello on his race—but who'll divulge
Time's secrets? lo, a step's awry, a
bulge

To be corrected by a step we thought
 Got over long ago—till that is wrought,
 No progress! and that scaffold in its
 turn
 Becomes, its service o'er, a thing to
 spurn.
 Meanwhile, your some half-dozen
 years of life
 Longer, dispose you to forego the
 strife—
 Who takes exception? 'Tis Ferrara,
 mind,
 Before us, and Goito's left behind:
 As you then were, as half yourself,
 desist!
 —The warrior-part of you may, an it
 list,
 Finding real faulchions difficult to
 poise,
 Fling them afar and taste the cream
 of joys
 By wielding one in fancy,—what is
 hard
 Of you, may spurn the vehicle that
 marred
 Elys so much, and in mere fancy glut
 His sense on her free beauties—we
 have but
 To please ourselves for law, and you
 could please
 What then appeared yourself by
 dreaming these
 Rather than doing these. now, fancy's
 trade
 Is ended, mind, nor one half may
 evade
 The other half: our friends are half
 of you:
 Out of a thousand helps, just one or
 two
 Can be accomplished presently—but
 flinch
 From these (as from the faulchion
 raised an inch.
 Elys described a couplet) and make
 proof
 Of fancy,—and while one half lolls
 aloof
 O' the grass, completing Rome to the
 tip-top—
 See if, for that, the other half will
 stop

A tear, begin a smile: that rabbi
 woes,
 Ludicrous in their patience as th
 chose
 To sit about their town and quietly
 Be slaughtered,—the poor reckl
 soldiery,
 With their ignoble rhymes on Richa
 how
 Polt-foot, sang they, was in a piff
 now,
 Cheering each other from the engin
 mounts,
 That crippled sprawling idiot w
 recounts
 How, lopt of limbs, he lay, stupid
 stone,
 Till the pains crept from out him o
 by one,
 And wriggles round the archers
 his head
 To earn a morsel of their chestr
 bread,—
 And Cino, always in the self-sar
 place
 Weeping; beside that other wretc
 case
 Eyepits to ear one gangrene since
 plied
 The engine in his coat of raw shee
 hide
 A double watch in the noon su
 and see
 Lucchino, beauty, with the favours fr
 Trim hacqueton, and sprucely scent
 hair,
 Campaigning it for the first time
 cut there
 In two already, boy enough to caw
 For latter orpine round the Southe
 wall,
 Tomà, where Richard's kept, becau
 that whore
 Marfisa the fool never saw before
 Sickened for flowers this wearisome
 siege:
 Then Tiso's wife—men liked the
 pretty liege,
 Cared for her least of whims onc
 Berta, wed
 A twelvemonth gone, and, now po
 Tiso's dead,

Delivering herself of his first child
On that chance heap of wet filth, re-
conciled

To fifty gazers. (Here a wind below
Made moody music augural of woe
From the pine barrier)—What if, now
the scene

Draws to a shutting, if yourself have
been

—You, plucking purples in Goito's
moss

Like edges of a trabea (not to cross
Your consul-feeling) or dry aloe-shafts
Here at Ferrara—He whom fortune
wafts,

This very age her best inheritance
Of opportunities? Yet we advance
Upon the last! Since talking is your
trade,

There's Salinguerra left you to per-
suade,

And then—

No—no—which latest chance secure!
Leapt up and cried Sordello: this
made sure,

The Past is yet redeemable whose
work

Was—help the Guelfs, and I, howe'er
it irk,

Thus help! He shook the foolish
aloe-haulm

Out of his doublet, paused, proceeded
calm

To the appointed presence. The
large head

Turned on its socket; And your
spokesman, said

The large voice, is Elcorte's happy
sprout?

How such—(so finishing a speech no
doubt

Addressed to Palma, silent at his side)
Or sober councils have diversified:

Elcorte's son! but forward as you
may.

Our lady's minstrel with so much to say!
The hesitating sunset floated back,

Rosily traversed in a single track
The chamber, from the lattice o'er

the girth
Of pines to the huge eagle blacked in

earth

Opposite, outlined sudden, spur to
crest,

That solid Salinguerra, and caressed
Palma's contour; 'twas Day looped
back Night's pall

Sordello had a chance left spite of
all.

And much he made of the convinc-
ing speech

He meant should compensate the Past
and reach

Through his youth's daybreak of un-
profit, quite

To his noon's labour, so proceed till
night

At leisure! The contrivances to bind
Taurello body with the Cause and

mind,
Was the consummate rhetoric just

that?
Yet most Sordello's argument dropped
flat

Through his accustomed fault of break-
ing yoke,

Disjoining him who felt from him who
spoke:

Was't not a touching incident—so
prompt

A rendering the world its just ac-
compl

Once proved its debtor? Who'd sup-
pose before

This proof that he, Goito's God of
yore,

At duty's instance could demean him-
self

So memorably, dwindle to a Guelf?
Be sure, in such delicious flattery

steeped,
His inmost self at the out-portion

peeped
Thus occupied; then stole a glance at
those

Appealed to, curious if her colour rose
Or his lip moved, while he discreetly

urged
The need of Lombardy's becoming
purged

At soonest of her barons; the poor
part

Abandoned thus missing the blood at
heart,

Spirit in brain, unseasonably off
 Elsewhere! But, though his speech
 was worthy scoff,
 Good-humoured Salinguerra, famed
 for tact
 That way, who, careless of his phrase,
 ne'er lacked
 The right phrase, and harangued
 Honorius dumb
 At his accession, looked as all fell
 plumb
 To purpose and himself took interest
 In every point his new instructor
 pressed
 —Left playing with the rescript's white
 wax seal
 To scrutinize Sordello head and heel:
 Then means he . . . yes assent sure?
 Well? alas,
 He said no more than, So it comes to
 pass
 That poesy, sooner than politics,
 Makes fade young hair: to think such
 speech could fix
 Taurello!
 Then a flash; he knew the truth:
 So fantasies shall break and fritter
 youth
 That he has long ago lost earnestness,
 Lost will to work, lost power to ex-
 press
 Even the need of working! Ere the
 grave
 No more occasions now, though he
 should crave
 One such, in right of superhuman toil
 To do what was undone, repair his
 spoil,
 Alter the Past—nought brings again
 the chance!
 Not that he was to die: he saw ask-
 ance
 Protract the ignominious years beyond
 To dream in—time to hope and time
 despond,
 Remember and forget, be sad, re-
 joice
 As saved a trouble, suited to his choice,
 One way or other—idle life out,
 drop
 No few smooth verses by the way—for
 prop

A thyrus these sad people should, the
 same,
 Pick up, set store by, and, so far from
 blame,
 Plant o'er his hearse convinced his
 better part
 Survived him. Rather tear men out
 the heart
 Of the truth! Sordello muttered, and
 renewed
 His propositions for the Multitude.
 But Salinguerra who, the last attack,
 Threw himself in his ruffling corslet
 back
 To hear the better, smilingly resumed
 Some task; beneath the carroch's
 warning boomed;
 He must decide with Tito; courteously
 He turned then, even seeming to agree
 With his admonisher—Assist the
 Pope,
 Extend his domination, fill the scope
 O' the Church based on All, by All,
 for All—
 Change Secular to Evangelical—
 Echoing his very sentence: all seemed
 lost,
 When sudden he looked, laughingly
 almost,
 To Palma: This opinion of your
 friend's
 For instance, would it answer Palma's
 ends?
 Best, were it not, turn Guelf, submit
 our Strength
 (Here he drew out his baldric to its
 length)
 To the Pope's Knowledge—let our
 King Richard slip,
 Wide to the walls throw ope your
 gates, equip
 Azzo with . . . but no matter! Who
 subscribe
 To a trite censure of the minstrel
 tribe
 Heaceforward? or pronounce,
 Heinrich used,
 "Spear-heads for battle, burr-heads
 for the joust!"
 —When Constance, for his couple
 would promote
 Alcama, from a parti-coloured coat

To holding her lord's stirrup in the wars,
 Not that I see where couplet-making jars
 With common sense : at Mantua we had borne
 This chanted, easier than their most forlorn
 Of bull-fights,—that's indisputable !
 Brave !
 Whom vanity nigh slew, contempt shall save !
 All's at an end : a Troubadour suppose
 Mankind's to class him with their friends or foes ?
 A puny uncouth ailing vassal think
 The world and him in some especial link ?
 Abrupt the visionary tether's burst—
 What's to reward or what to be amerced
 If a poor drudge, solicitous to dream
 Deservingly, gets tangled by his theme
 So far as to conceit his knack or gift
 Or whatsoe'er it be of verse might lift
 The globe, a lever like the hand and head
 Of Men of Action, as the Jongleurs said,
 The Great Men, in the people's dialect ?
 And not a moment did this scorn affect
 Sordello : scorn the poet ? They, for once,
 Asking "what was," obtained a full response.
 Bid Naddo think at Mantua, he had but
 To look into his promptuary, put
 His hand on a set thought in a set speech :
 And was Sordello fitted thus for each
 Conjecture ? No wise ; since within his soul
 Perception brooded unexpressed and whole.
 A healthy spirit like a healthy frame
 Craves aliment in plenty and, the same,
 Changes, assimilates its aliment :
 Perceived Sordello, on a truth intent ?

Next day no formularies more you saw
 Than figs or olives in a sated maw
 —'Tis Knowledge, whither such perceptions tend,
 They lose themselves in that, means to an end,
 The Many Old producing some One New.
 A Last unlike the First. If lies are true,
 The Caliph Haroun's man of brass receives
 A meal, ay, millet grains and lettuce leaves
 Together in his stomach rattle loose—
 You find them perfect next day to produce
 But never expect the man, on strength of that,
 Can roll an iron camel-collar flat
 Like Haroun's self ! I tell you, what was stored
 Parcel by parcel through his life, out-poured
 That eve, was, for that age, a novel thing :
 And round those three the People formed a ring,
 Suspended their own vengeance, chose await
 The issue of this strife to reinstate
 Them in the right of taking it—in fact
 He must be proved their lord ere they exact
 Amends for that lord's defalcation.
 Last,
 A reason why the phrases flowed so fast
 Was in his quite forgetting for the time
 Himself in his amaze that his rhyme
 Disguised the royalty so much : he there—
 They full face to him—and yet unaware
 Who was the King and who . . .
 But if I lay
 On thine my spirit and compel obey
 His lord—Taurello ? Impotent to build
 Another Rome, but hardly so unskilled
 In what such builder should have been as brook
 One shame beyond the charge that he forsook

His function ! Set me free that shame
 I bend
 A brow before, suppose new years to
 spend,
 Allow each chance, nor fruitlessly,
 recur—
 Measure thee with the Minstrel, then,
 demur
 At any crown he claims ! That I
 must cede
 As 'tis my right to my especial meed—
 Confess you fitter help the world than I
 Ordained its champion from eternity,
 Is much : but to behold you scorn the
 post
 I quit in your behalf—as aught's to
 boast
 Unless you help the world ! And
 while he rung
 The changes on this theme, the roof
 up-sprung,
 The sad walls of the presence-chamber
 died
 Into the distance, or embowering vied
 With far-away Goito's vine-frontier ;
 And crowds of faces (only keeping clear
 The rose-light in the midst, his van-
 tage-ground
 To fight their battle from) deep clus-
 tered round
 Sordello, with good wishes no mere
 breath,
 Kind prayers for him no vapour, since,
 come death,
 Come life, he was fresh-sinewed every
 joint,
 Each bone new-marrowed as whom
 Gods anoint
 Though mortal to their rescue : now
 let sprawl
 The snaky volumes hither, Typhon's all
 For Hercules to trample—good report
 From Salinguerra's only to extort ?
 So was I (closed he his inculcating
 A poet must be earth's essential king)
 So was I, royal so, and if I fail
 'Tis not the royalty ye witness quail
 But one deposed who, caring not exert
 Its proper essence, trifled malapert
 With accidents instead—good things
 assigned
 The herald of a better thing behind—

And, worthy through display of these,
 put forth
 Never the inmost all-surpassing worth
 That constitutes him King precisely
 since
 As yet no other creature may evince
 Its like : the power he took most
 pride to test,
 Whereby all forms of life had been
 professed
 At pleasure, forms already on the earth
 Was but a means to power whose
 novel birth
 Should, in its novelty, be kingship's
 proof—
 Now, whether he came near or kept
 aloof,
 These forms unalterable first to last
 Proved him her copy, not the proto-
 plast
 Of Nature : what would come of being
 free
 By action to exhibit tree for tree,
 Bird, beast for beast and bird, or
 prove earth bore
 A veritable man or woman more ?
 Means to an end, such proofs ; and
 what the end ?
 You essence, whatsoe'er it be, extend—
 Never contract ! Already you include
 The multitude ; now let the multitude
 Include yourself, and the result is new ;
 Themselves before, the multitude turn
 you ;
 This were to live and move and have
 (in them)
 Your being, and secure a diadem
 That's to transmit (because no cycle
 years
 Beyond itself, but on itself returns)
 When the full sphere in wane, the
 world o'erlaid
 Long since with you, shall have in
 turn obeyed
 Some orb still prouder, some displayer,
 still
 More potent than the last, of human
 Will,
 And some new King depose the old.
 Of such
 Am I—whom pride of this elates too
 much ?

Safe, rather say, mid troops of peers
again ;
I, with my words, hailed brother of
the train
Once deeds sufficed : for, let the world
roll back,
Who fails, through deeds diverse soe'er,
re-track
My purpose still, my task ? A teem-
ing crust—
Air, flame, earth, wave at conflict—
see ! Needs must
Emerge some Calm embodied these
refer
(Saturn—no ! yellow-bearded Jupiter?)
The brawl to ; some existence like a
pact
And protest against Chaos, some first
fact
If the faint of Time . . . my deep of
life, I know,
Is unavailing e'en to poorly show
For here the Chief immeasurably
yawned)
Deeds in their due gradation till Song
dawned—
The fullest effluence of the finest mind
All in degree, no way diverse in kind
From those about us, minds which,
more or less,
Lofty or low, in moving seek impress
themselves on somewhat ; but one
mind has climbed
Step after step, by just ascent sublimed :
Thought is the soul of act, and stage
by stage,
Is soul from body still to disengage
As tending to a freedom which rejects
such help and incorporeally affects
The world, producing deeds but not
by deeds,
Swaying, in others, frames itself ex-
ceeds,
Assigning them the simpler tasks it used
As patiently perform till Song produced
Acts, by thoughts only, for the mind :
divest
Mind of e'en Thought, and, lo, God's
unexpressed
Will dawns above us. But so much to
win
Ere that. A lesser round of steps within

The last. About me, faces ! and they
flock.
The earnest faces. What shall I un-
lock
By song ? behold me prompt, whate'er
it be,
To minister : how much can mortals see
Of Life ? No more ? I covet the first
task
And marshal you Life's elemental
Masque
Show Men, on evil or on good lay
stress,
This light, this shade make prominent,
suppress
All ordinary hues that softening blend
Such natures with the level : apprehend
Which evil is, which good, if I allot
Your Hell, the Purgatory, Heaven ye
wot,
To those you doubt concerning : I en-
womb
Some wretched Friedrich with his
red-hot tomb,
Some dubious spirit, Lombard Agilulph
With the black chastening river I
engulph ;
Some unapproached Matilda I enshrine
With languors of the planet of decline—
These fail to recognise, to arbitrate
Between henceforth, to rightly estimate
Thus marshalled in the Masque ! My-
self, the while,
As one of you, am witness, shrink or
smile
At my own showing ! Next age—
what's to do ?
The men and women stationed hitherto
Will I unstation, good and bad, conduct
Each nature to its farthest or obstruct
At soonest in the world : Light,
thwarted, breaks
A limpid purity to rainbow flakes,
Or Shadow, helped, freezes to gloom :
behold
How such, with fit assistance to unfold,
Or obstacles to crush them, disengage
Their forms, love, hate, hope, fear,
peace make, war wage.
In presence of you all ! Myself implied
Superior now, as, by the platform's
side,

Bidding them do and suffer to content
 The world . . . no—that I wait not
 —circumvent
 A few it has contented, and to these
 Offer unveil the last of mysteries
 I boast! Man's life shall have yet
 freer play:
 Once more I cast external things away
 And Natures, varied now, so de-
 compose
 That . . . but enough! Why fancy
 how I rose,
 Or rather you advanced since evermore
 Yourselves effect what I was fain
 before
 Effect, what I supplied yourselves
 suggest,
 What I leave bare yourselves can now
 invest?
 How we attained to talk as brothers
 talk,
 In half-words, call things by half-
 names, no balk
 From dis-continuing old aids—To-day
 Takes in account the work of Yester-
 day—
 Has not the world a Past now, its adept
 Consults ere he dispense with or
 accept
 New aids? a single touch more may
 enhance,
 A touch less turn to insignificance
 Those structures' symmetry the Past
 has strewed
 The world with, once so bare: leave
 the mere rude
 Explicit details, 'tis but brother's
 speech
 We need, speech where an accent's
 change gives each
 The other's soul—no speech to under-
 stand
 By former audience—need was then
 expand,
 Expatiate—hardly were they brothers!
 true—
 Nor I lament my less remove from
 you,
 Nor reconstruct what stands already:
 ends
 Accomplished turn to means: my art
 intends

New structure from the ancient
 they changed
 The spoils of every clime at Ven-
 ranged
 The horned and snouted Libyan
 upright
 As in his desert, by some simple bri-
 Clay cinerary pitcher—Thebes
 Rome,
 Athens as Byzant rifled, till their Do-
 From Earth's reputed consummati-
 razed
 A seal the all-transmuting Triad bla-
 Above. Ah, whose that fortun-
 ne'ertheless
 E'en he must stoop contented to
 press
 No tithe of what's to say—the vehi-
 Never suffice! —but his work is s-
 For faces like the faces that select
 The single service I am bound effe-
 Nor murmur, bid me, still as poet, be
 Taurello to the Guelf cause, disallo-
 The Kaiser's coming—which wi-
 heart, soul, strength,
 I labour for, this eve, who feel
 length
 My past career's outrageous vanity
 And would (as vain amends) die, ev-
 die
 Now I first estimate the boon of life
 So death might bow Taurello—su-
 this strife
 Is the last strife—the People n-
 support.
 My poor Sordello! what may w-
 extort
 By this, I wonder? Palma's lighte-
 eyes
 Turned to Taurello who, long pa-
 surprise,
 Began, You love him—what you'
 say at large
 If I say briefly? First, your father's
 charge
 To me, his friend, peruse: I guesse-
 indeed
 You were no stranger to the cours-
 decreed
 Us both: I leave his children to th-
 saints:
 As for a certain project, he acquaints

The Pope with that, and offers him
the best
Of your possessions to permit the rest
Go peaceably—to Ecelin, a stripe
Of soil the cursed Vicentines will gripe,
—To Alberic, a patch the Trevisan
Clutches already; extricate who can
Treville, Villarazzi, Puissolo,
Cartiglione, Loria—all go,
And with them go my hopes! 'Tis
lost, then! Lost
This eve, our crisis, and some pains
it cost
Procuring; thirty years—as good I'd
spent
Like our admonisher! But each his
bent
Pursues—no question, one might live
absurd
Oneself this while, by deed as he by
word,
Persisting to obtrude an influence
where
Tis made account of much as . . .
nay, you fare
With twice the fortune, youngster—I
submit,
Happy to parallel my waste of wit
With the renowned Sordello's—you
decide
A course for me—Romano may abide
Romano,—Bacchus! Who'd suppose
the dearth
Of Ecelins and Alberics on earth?
Say there's a prize in prospect, must
disgrace
Betide competitors? An obscure place
Suits me—there wants youth, bustle,
one to stalk
And attitudinize—some fight, more
talk,
Most flaunting badges—'twere not
hard make clear
since Friedrich's very purposes lie
here
—Here—pity they are like to be!
For me,
Whose station's fixed unceremoniously
Long since, small use contesting; I
am but
The liegeman, you are born the lieges
—shut

That gentle mouth now!—or resume
your kin
In your sweet self; Palma were Ecelin
For me and welcome! Could that
neck endure
This bauble for a cumbrous garniture
You should . . . or might one bear
it for you? Stay—
I have not been so flattered many a day
As by your pale friend—Bacchus!
The least help
Would lick the hind's fawn to a lion's
whelp—
His neck is broad enough—a ready
tongue
Beside—too writhled—but, the main
thing, young—
I could . . . why look ye!
And the badge was thrown
Across Sordello's neck: this badge
alone
Makes you Romano's Head—the
Lombard's curb
Turns on your neck which would, on
mine, disturb
My pauldron, said Taurello. A mad
act,
Nor dreamed about a moment since—
in fact
Not when his sportive arm rose for
the nonce—
But he had dallied overmuch, this once.
With power: the thing was done, and
he, aware
The thing was done, proceeded to
declare
(So like a nature made to serve, excel
In serving, only feel by service well)
That he should make him all he said
and more:
As good a scheme as any: what's to pore
At in my face? he asked—ponder in-
stead
This piece of news; you are Romano's
Head—
You cannot slacken pace so near the
goal,
Suffer my Azzo to escape heart-whole
This time! For you there's Palma
to espouse—
For me, one crowning trouble ere I
house

Like my compeer.

On which ensued a strange
And solemn visitation—mighty change
O'er every one of them—each looked
on each—

Up in the midst a truth grew, without
speech,

And when the giddiness sank and the
haze

Subsided, they were sitting, no amaze,
Sordello with the baldric on, his sire
Silent though his proportions seemed
aspire

Momently ; and, interpreting the thrill
Night at its ebb, Palma you found
was still

Relating somewhat Adelaide confessed
A year ago, while dying on her breast,
Of a contrivance that Vicenza night,
Her Ecelin had birth : their convoy's
flight

Cut off a moment, coiled inside the
flame

That wallowed like a dragon at his
game

The toppling city through—San Biagio
rocks !

And wounded lies in her delicious
locks

Retrude, the frail mother, on her face,
None of her wasted, just in one em-
brace

Covering her child : when, as they
lifted her,

Cleaving the tumult, mighty, mightier
And mightiest Taurello's cry outbroke,
Leapt like a tongue of fire that cleaves
the smoke,

Midmost to cheer his Mantuans onward
—drown

His colleague's clamour, Ecelin's up,
down

The disarray : failed Adelaide see then
Who was the natural Chief, the Man
of Men ?

Outstripping time her Ecelin burst
swathe,

Stood up with eyes haggard beyond the
scathe

From wandering after his heritage
Lost once and lost for aye—what could
engage

That deprecating glance ? A ne
Shape leant

On a familiar Shape—gloatingly be
O'er his discomfiture ; 'mid wreath
wore,

still one outflamed the rest—her child
before

'Twas Salinguerra's for his child
scorn, hate

Rage startled her from Ecelin's to
late !

A moment's work, and round its foot he
spurned

Never that brow to earth ! Ere sen
returned—

The act conceived, adventured, and
complete,

They stole away towards an obscu
retreat

Mother and child—Retrude's self r
slain

(Nor even here Taurello move
though pain

Was fled ; and what assured the
most 'twas fled,

All pain, was, if you raised the p
hushed head

'Twould turn this way and that, wa
awhile,

And only settle into its old smile
Graceful as the disquieted water-th

Steadying itself, remarked they, in
quag

On either side their path) when s
fered look

Downward : they marched : no s
of life once shook

The company's close litter of cro
spears

Till, as they reached Goito, a
tears

Slept in the sunset from her long bl
lash,

And she was gone. So far the act
rash—

No crime. They laid Retrude in
font

Taurello's very gift, her child
wont

To sit beneath—constant as eve
came

To sit by its attendant girls the sa

A new
 ingly bent
 wreaths it
 her child's
 his child :
 celin—too
 's foot had
 Ere sense
 tured, and
 an obscure
 e's self not
 lo moved)
 ured them
 ed the pale
 that, waver
 I smile
 water-flag
 they, in the
) when suf-
 ed : no sign
 r of crossed
 oito, a few
 er long black
 ar the action
 etrude in the
 r child was
 at as eve he
 is the same

As one them. For Palma, she
 won—blend
 This magic spirit to the end
 led her first—scarcely had
 disobey the Adelaide who scared
 into vowing never to disclose
 ret to her husband which so
 her
 blood at half recit. I she contrived
 Hide from him Taurello's infant lived
 revealing that, himself should
 man
 Romano's fortunes: and, a crime so far,
 received that action: she was
 Salinguerra's nature, and his cold
 calm acquiescence in his lot! But free
 rt the secret to Romano, she
 ed to repossess Sordello of
 ritage, and hers, and that way
 The mask, but after years, long years!
 while now
 nor Romano's sign-mark on that
 brow?
 Across Taurello's heart his arms
 were locked:
 And 'twas when speak he did, as if he
 mocked
 The minstrel, who had not to move,
 he said,
 Nor stir—should Fate defraud him of
 a shred
 Of this son's infancy? much less his
 youth
 Laughingly all this) which to aid, in
 truth,
 Himself, reserved on purpose, had not
 grown
 Old, not too old—'twas better keep
 alone
 Till now, and never idly met till now:
 Then, in the same breath, told Sor-
 dello how
 The intimations of this eve's event
 Were futile—Friedrich means advance
 to Trent,
 Thence to Verona, then to Rome—
 there stop—
 Tumble the Church down, institute a-
 top

The Alps a Prefecture of Lombardy:
 —That's now—no prophesying what
 may be
 Anon, beneath a monarch of the clime,
 Native of Gesi, passing his youth's
 prime
 At Naples. Tito bids my choice de-
 cide
 On whom . . .
 Embrace him, madman! Palma cried
 Who through the laugh saw sweat drops
 burst apace
 And his lips' blanching: he did not
 embrace
 Sordello, but he laid Sordello's hand
 On his own eyes, mouth, forehead.
 Understand,
 This while Sordello was becoming
 flushed
 Out of his whiteness; thoughts rushed
 fancies rushed;
 He pressed his hand upon his head
 and signed
 Both should forbear him. Nay, the
 best's behind!
 Taurello laughed—not quite with the
 same laugh:
 The truth is, thus you scatter, ay, like
 chaff
 The Guelfs a despicable monk recoils
 From—nor expect a fickle Kaiser
 spoils
 Our triumph!—Friedrich? Think
 you I intend
 Friedrich shall reap the fruits of blood
 I spend
 And brain I waste? Think you the
 people clap
 Their hands at my out-hewing this
 wild gap
 For any Friedrich to fill up? 'Tis
 mine—
 That's yours: I tell you towards some
 such design
 Have I worked blindly, yes, and idly,
 yes,
 And for another, yes—but worked no
 less
 With instinct at my heart; I else had
 swerved,
 While now—look round! My cunning
 has preserved

Samminiato—that's a central place
 Secures us Florence, boy, in Pisa's
 case
 By land as she by sea ; with Pisa ours,
 And Florence, and Pistoia, one de-
 vours
 The land at leisure ! Gloriously dis-
 persed—
 Brescia, observe, Milan, Piacenza first
 That flanked us (ah, you know not !)
 in the March ;
 On these we pile, as keystone of our
 arch,
 Romagna and Bologna, whose first
 span
 Covered the Trentine and the Val-
 sugan ;
 Sofia's Egna by Bolgiano's sure . . .
 So he proceeded. Half of all this
 pure
 Delusion, doubtless, nor the rest too
 true,
 But what was undone he felt sure to
 do
 As ring by ring he wrung off, flung
 away
 The pauldron-rings to give his sword-
 arm play—
 Need of the sword now ! That would
 soon adjust
 Aught wrong at present ; to the sword
 intrust
 Sordello's whiteness, undersize ; 'twas
 plain
 He hardly rendered right to his own
 brain—
 Like a brave hound men educate to
 pride
 Himself on speed or scent nor aught
 beside,
 As though he could not, gift by gift,
 match men !
 Palma had listened patiently : but
 when
 'Twas time expostulate, attempt with-
 draw
 Taurello from his child, she, without
 awe
 Took off his iron arms from, one by
 one,
 Sordello's shrinking shoulders, and,
 that done,

Made him avert his visage and relieve
 Sordello (you might see his corslet
 heave
 The while) who, loose, rose—tried to
 speak, then sank ;
 They left him in the chamber—all was
 blank.
 And even reeling down the castle-
 stair
 Taurello kept up, as though unaware
 Palma was guide to him, the old device
 —Something of Milan—how we muster
 thrice
 The Torriani's strength there — all
 along
 Our own Visconti cowed them—thus
 the song
 Continued even while she bade him
 stoop,
 Thrid somehow, by some glimpse of
 arrow-loop,
 The turnings to the gallery below,
 Where he stopped short as Palma let
 him go.
 When he had sate in silence long enough
 Splintering the stone bench, braving
 a rebuff
 She stopt the truncheon ; only to com-
 mence
 One of Sordello's poems, a pretence
 For speaking, some poor rhyme of
 Elys' hair
 And head that's sharp and perfect like
 a pear,
 So smooth and close are laid the few
 fine locks
 Stained like pale honey oozed from
 topmost rocks
 Sun-blanch'd the livelong Summer—
 from his worst
 Performance, the Goito, as his first :
 And that at end, conceiving from the
 brow
 And open mouth no silence would
 serve now,
 Went on to say the whole world loved
 that man
 And, for that matter, thought his face,
 tho' wan.
 Eclipsed the Count's—he sucking in
 each phrase
 As if an angel spoke : the foolish praise

Ended, he drew her on his mailed
 knees, made
 Her face a framework with his hands,
 a shade,
 A crown, an aureole—there must she
 remain
 (Her little mouth compressed with
 smiling pain
 As in his gloves she felt her tresses
 twitch)
 To get the best look at, in fittest niche
 Dispose his saint ; that done, he kissed
 her brow—
 Lauded her father for his treason now,
 He told her, only how could one suspect
 The wit in him? whose clansman, re-
 collect,
 Was ever Salinguerra—she, the same,
 Romano and his lady—so might claim
 To know all, as she should—and thus
 begun
 Schemes with a vengeance, schemes
 on schemes, not one
 Fit to be told that foolish boy, he said,
 But only let Sordello Palma wed,
 —Then!
 'Twas a dim long narrow place at best :
 Midway a sole grate showed the fiery
 West
 As shows its corpse the world's end
 some split tomb—
 A gloom, a rift of fire, another gloom
 Faced Palma—but at length Taurello
 set
 Her free; the grating held one ragged jet
 Of fierce gold fire : he lifted her within
 The hollow underneath—how else
 begin
 Fate's second marvellous cycle, else
 renew
 The ages than with Palma plain in
 view?
 Then paced the passage, hands
 clenched, head erect,
 Pursuing his discourse ; a grand un-
 checked
 Monotony made out from his quick talk
 And the recurring noises of his walk ;
 —Somewhat too much like the o'er-
 charged assent
 Of two resolved friends in one danger
 blent,
 Who hearten each the other against
 heart—
 Boasting there's nought to care for,
 when, apart
 The boaster, all's to care for : he,
 beside
 Some shape not visible, in power and
 pride
 Approached, out of the dark, ging-
 lingly near,
 Nearer, passed close in the broad
 light, his ear
 Crimson, eyeballs suffused, temples
 full-fraught,
 Just a snatch of the rapid speech you
 caught,
 And on he strode into the oppositedark
 Till presently the harsh heel's turn, a
 spark
 I' the stone, and whirl of some loose
 embossed thong
 That crashed against the angle aye so
 long
 After the last, punctual to an amount
 Of mailed great paces you could not
 it count,
 Prepared you for the pacing back
 again ;
 And by the snatches might you as-
 certain
 That, Friedrich's Prefecture sur-
 mounted, left
 By this alone in Italy, they cleft
 Asunder, crushed together, at command
 Of none, were free to break up Hilde-
 brand,
 Rebuild, he and Sordello, Charle-
 magne—
 But garnished, Strength with Know-
 ledge, if we deign
 Accept that compromise and stoop to
 give
 Romelaw, the Cæsars' Representative.
 —Enough that the illimitable flood
 Of triumphs after triumphs, understood
 In its faint reflux (you shall hear)
 sufficed
 Young Ecelin for appanage, enticed
 Him till, these long since quiet in
 their graves,
 He found 'twas looked for that a long
 life's braves

Should somehow be made good—so,
 weak and worn,
 Must stagger up at Milan, one grey
 morn
 Of the To-Come, to fight his latest
 fight.
 But, Salinguerra's prophecy at height—
 He voluble with a raised arm and stiff,
 A blaring voice, a blazing eye, as if
 He had our very Italy to keep
 Or cast away, or gather in a heap
 To garrison the better—ay, his word
 Was, "run the cucumber into a gourd,
 Drive Trent upon Apulia"—at their
 pitch
 Who spied the continents and islands
 which
 Grew sickles, mulberry leaflets in the
 map—
 (Strange that three such confessions so
 should hap
 To Palma Dante spoke with in the
 clear
 Amorous silence of the Swooning-
 sphere.
 Cunizza, as he called her! Never ask
 Of Palma more! She sate, knowing
 her task
 Was done, the labour of it—for success
 Concerned not Palma, passion's vo-
 taress)
 Triumph at height, I say, Sordello
 crowned—
 Above the passage suddenly a sound
 Stops speech, stops walk: back shrinks
 Taurello, bids
 With large involuntary asking lids
 Palma interpret. 'Tis his own foot-
 stamp—
 Your hand! His summons! Nay,
 this idle damp
 Befits not! Out they two reeled
 dizzily:
 "Visconti's strong at Milan," re-
 sumed he
 In the old somewhat insignificant way
 (Was Palma wont years afterward to
 say)
 As though the spirit's flight sustained
 thus far
 Dropped at that very instant. Gone
 they are—

Palma, Taurello; Eglamor anon,
 Ecelin, Alberic . . . ah, Naddo's
 gone!
 —Labours this moonrise what the
 Master meant
 "Is Squarcialupo speckled?—purulent
 I'd say, but when was Providence put
 out?
 He carries somehow handily about
 His spite nor fouls himself!" Goito's
 vines
 Stand like a cheat detected—stark
 rough lines
 The moon breaks through, a grey
 mean scale against
 The vault where, this eve's Maiden,
 thou remain'st
 Like some fresh martyr, eyes fixed—
 who can tell?
 As Heaven, now all's at end, did not
 so well
 Spite of the faith and victory, to leave
 Its virgin quite to death in the lone eve:
 While the persisting hermit-bee . . .
 ha! wait
 No longer—these in compass, forward
 fate!

BOOK THE SIXTH

THE thought of Eglamor's least like a
 thought,
 And yet a false one, was, Man shrinks
 to nought
 If matched with symbols of immen-
 sity—
 Must quail, forsooth, before a quiet
 sky
 Or sea, too little for their quietude:
 And, truly, somewhat in Sordello's
 mood
 Confirmed its speciousness while even-
 ing sank
 Down the near terrace to the further
 bank,
 And only one spot left out of the night
 Glimmered upon the river opposite—
 A breadth of watery heaven like a
 bay,
 A sky-like space of water, ray for ray

And star for star, one richness where
 they mixed
 As this and that wing of an angel,
 fixed,
 Tumultuary splendours folded in
 To die: nor turned he till Ferrara's
 din
 (Say, the monotonous speech from a
 man's lip
 Who lets some first and eager purpose
 slip
 In a new fancy's birth; the speech
 keeps on
 Though elsewhere its informing soul
 be gone)
 Aroused him, surely offered succour:
 fate
 Paused with this eve; ere she per-
 cipitate
 Herself . . . put off strange after-
 thoughts awhile,
 That voice, those large hands, that
 portentous smile. . . .
 What help to pierce the Future as the
 Past
 Lay in the plaining city?
 And at last
 The main discovery and prime con-
 cern,
 All that just now imported him to
 learn,
 His truth, like yonder slow moon to
 complete
 Heaven, rose again, and naked at his
 feet
 Lighted his old life's every shift and
 change,
 Effort with counter-effort; nor the
 range
 Of each looked wrong except wherein
 it checked
 Some other—which of these could he
 suspect
 Prying into them by the sudden blaze?
 The real way seemed made up of all
 the ways—
 Mood after mood of the one mind
 in him;
 Tokens of the existence, bright or
 dim,
 Of a transcendent all-embracing sense
 Demanding only outward influence,
 A soul, in Palma's phrase, above his
 soul,
 Power to uplift his power, such moon's
 control,
 Over the sea-depths, and their mass
 had swept
 Onward from the beginning and still
 kept
 Its course; but years and years the
 sky above
 Held none, and so, untasked of any
 love.
 His sensitiveness idled, now amori,
 Alive now, and to sullenness or sport
 Given wholly up, disposed itself anew
 At every passing instigation, grew
 And dwindled at caprice, in foam-
 showers spilt,
 Wedge-like insisting, quivered now a
 gilt
 Shield in the sunshine, now a blinding
 race
 Of whitest ripples o'er the reef—found
 place
 For myriad charms; not gathered up
 and, hurled
 Right from its heart, encompassing the
 world.
 So had Sordello been, by consequence,
 Without a function: others made pre-
 tence
 To strengths not half his own, yet had
 some core
 Within, submitted to some moon,
 before
 It still, superior still whate'er its force,
 Were able therefore to fulfil a course
 Nor missed Life's crown, authentic
 attribute—
 To each who lives must be a certain fruit
 Of having lived in his degree, a stage
 Earlier or later in men's pilgrimage,
 To stop at; and to which those spirits
 tend
 Who, still discovering beauty without
 end,
 Amass the scintillations for one star
 —Something unlike them, self-sus-
 tained, afar,
 And meanwhile nurse the dream of
 being blest
 By winning it to notice and invest

Their souls with alien glory some one
 day
 Where'er the nucleus, gathering shape
 always,
 Round to the perfect circle—soon or late
 According as themselves are formed
 to wait;
 Whether 'tis human beauty will suffice
 —The yellow hair and the luxurious
 eyes,
 Or human intellect seem best, or each
 Combine in some ideal form past reach
 On earth, or else some shade of these,
 some aim,
 Some love, hate even, take their place
 the same
 That may be served—all this they do
 not lose,
 Waiting for death to live, nor idly
 choose
 What Hell shall be—a progress thus
 pursued
 Through all existence, still above the
 food
 That's offered them, still towering
 beyond
 The widened range in virtue of their
 bond
 Of sovereignty: not that a Palma's Love
 A Salinguerra's Hate would equal prove
 To swaying all Sordello: wherefore
 doubt,
 Love meet for such a Strength, some
 Moon's without
 To match his Sea?—fear, Good so
 manifest,
 Only the Best breaks faith?—but that
 the Best
 Somehow eludes us ever, still might be
 And is not: crave you gems? where's
 penury
 Of their material round us? pliant earth,
 The plastic flame—what balks the
 Mage his birth
 —Jacynth in balls, or lodestone by
 the block?
 Flinders enrich the strand and veins
 the rock—
 No more! Ask creatures? Life in
 tempest, Thought
 Clothes the keen hill-top, mid-day
 woods are fraught

With fervours . . . ah, these forms
 are well enough—
 But we had hoped, encouraged by the
 stuff
 Profuse at Nature's pleasure, Men
 beyond
 These Men! and thus, perchance, are
 over-fond
 In arguing, from Good the Best, from
 force
 Divided—force combined, an ocean's
 course
 From this our sea whose mere intes-
 tine pants
 Had seemed at times sufficient to our
 wants.
 —External Power? If none be ade-
 quate
 And he have been ordained (a prouder
 fate)
 A law to his own sphere? the need
 remove
 All incompleteness, be that law, that
 love?
 Nay, really such be others' laws,
 though veiled
 In mercy to each vision that had failed
 If unassisted by its Want, for lure,
 Embodied? stronger vision could en-
 dure
 The simple want—no bauble for a
 truth!
 The People were himself; and by the
 ruth
 At their condition was he less impelled
 To alter the discrepancy beheld
 Than if, from the sound Whole, a
 sickly Part
 Subtracted were transformed, decked
 out with art,
 Then palmed on him as alien woe—
 the Guelf
 To succour, proud that he forsook
 himself?
 No: All's himself—all service, there-
 fore, rates
 Alike, nor serving one part, immo-
 lates
 The rest: but all in time! That
 lance of yours
 Makes havoc soon with Malek and his
 Moors,

That Buckler's lined with many a
Giant's beard
Ere long, Porphyrio, be the lance but
reared,
The buckler wielded handsomely as
now :
But view your escort, bear in mind
your vow,
Count the pale acts of sand to pass
ere that,
And, if you hope we struggle through
this flat,
Put lance and buckler up—next half-
month lacks
A sturdy exercise of mace or axe
To cleave this dismal brake of prickly-
pear
Bristling holds Cydippe by the hair,
Lames barefoot Agathon.
Oh, People, urge
Your claims!—for thus he ventured
to the verge
Push a vain mummery which per-
chance distrust
Of his fast-slipping resolution trust
No less : accordingly the Crowd—as yet
He had unconsciously contrived forget
To dwell upon the points . . . one
might assuage
The signal horrors sooner than engage
With a dim vulgar vast unobvious grief
Not to be fancied off, obtain relief
In brilliant fits, cured by a happy quirk,
But by dim vulgar vast unobvious work
To correspond—however, forth they
stood :
And now content thy stronger vision,
brood
On thy bare want ; the grave stript
turf by turf,
Study the corpse-face thro' the taint-
worms' scurf !
Down sank the People's Then ; up-
rose their Now.
These sad ones render service to !
And how
Piteously little must that service prove
—Had surely proved in any case ! for
move
Each other obstacle away, let youth
—Had been aware it had surprised a
Truth
'Twere service to impart—can Truth
be seized,
Settled forthwith, and of the captive
eased
Its captor look around, since this alit
So happily, no gesture luring it,
The earnest of a flock to follow?
Vain,
Most vain ! a life's to spend ere this
he chain,
To the poor crowd's complacence ;
ere the crowd
Pronounce it captured he describes a
cloud
Its kin of twice the plumage—he, in
turn,
If he shall live as many lives, may
learn
Secure—not otherwise. Then Mantua
called
Back to his mind how certain bards
were thrall'd
—Buds blasted, but of breaths more
like perfumes
Than Naddo's staring nosegay's carrion
blooms
Could boast—some rose that burnt
heart out in sweets,
A spendthrift in the Spring, no Sum-
mer greets—
Some Dularete, drunk with truths
and wine,
Grown bestial dreaming how become
divine.
Yet to surmount this obstacle, com-
mence
With the commencement, merits
crowning ! Hence
Must Truth be casual Truth, elicited
In sparks so mean, at intervals dis-
spread
So rarely, that 'tis like at no one
time
Of the world's story has not Truth,
the prime
Of Truth, the very Truth which, loosed
had hurled
Its course aright, been really in the
world
Content the while with some mean
spark by dint
Of some chance-blow, the solitary hint

Of buried fire, which, rip its breast,
would stream
Sky-ward!

Sordello's miserable gleam
Was looked for at the moment: he
would dash

This badge to earth and all it brought,
abash

Taurello thus, perhaps persuade him
wrest

The Kaiser from his purpose; would
attest

His constancy in any case. Before
He dashes it, however, think once
more!

For, was that little truly service? Ay—
I' the end, no doubt; but meantime?
Plain you spy

Its ultimate Effect, but many flaws
Of vision blur each intervening Cause;
Were the day's fraction clear as the
life's sum

Of service, Now as filled as the To-
come

With evidence of good—not too minute
A share to vie with evil! How dispute
The Guelfs were fittest maintain in
rule?

That made the life's work: not so
easy school

Your day's work—say, on nature's cir-
cumstanced

So variously, which yet, as each ad-
vanced

Or might impede that Guelf rule, it
behoved

You, for the Then's sake, hate what
Now you loved,

Love what you hated; nor if one man
bore

Brand upon temples while his fellow
wore

The aureole, would it task us to
decide—

But portioned duly out, the Future vied
Never with the unparcelled Present!
Smite

Or spare so much on warrant all so
slight?

The Present's complete sympathies
to break,

Aversions bear with, for a Future's sake

So feeble? Tito ruined through one
speck,

The Legate saved by his sole lightish
fleck?

This were work, true—but work per-
formed at cost

Of other work—ought gained here
elsewhere lost—

For a new segment spoil an orb half
done—

Rise with the People one step, and
sink . . . one?

Would it were one step—less than the
whole face—

Of things our novel duty bids erase!
Harms are to vanquish; what? the

Prophet saith,
The Minstrel singeth vainly then

Old faith,
Old courage, born of the surrounding
harms,

Were not, from highest to the lowest
charms?

Oh, flame persists, but is not glare
as staunch?

Were the salt marshes stagnate
crystals branch—

Blood dries to crimson—Evil's beauti-
fied

In every shape! But Beauty thrus
aside

You banish Evil: wherefore? After all
Is Evil our result less natural

Than Good? For overlook the Sea
sons' strife

With tree and flower—the hideous
animal life,

Of which who seeks shall find:
grinning taunt

For his solution, must endure the
vaunt

Of Nature's angel, as a child that
knows

Himself befooled, unable to propose
Aught better than the fooling—and

but care
For Men, the varied People then and

there,
Of which 'tis easy saying Good and

Ill
Claim him alike! Whence rose the
claim but still

From Ill, the fruit of Ill—what else
 could knit
 Him theirs but Sorrow? Any free
 from it
 Were also free from him! A happiness
 Could be distinguished in this morn-
 ing's press
 Of miseries—the fool's who passed a
 gibe
 On thee, said he, so wedded to his tribe
 He carries green and yellow tokens in
 His very face that he's a Ghibellin—
 Much hold on him that fool obtained!
 Nay mount
 Yet higher; and upon Men's own
 account
 Must Evil stay; for what is Joy? To
 heave
 Up one obstruction more, and common
 leave
 What was peculiar—by this act destroy
 Itself; a partial death is every joy;
 The sensible escape, enfranchisement
 Of a sphere's essence: once the vexed
 —content,
 The cramped—at large, the growing
 circle—round,
 All's to begin again—some novel bound
 To break, some new enlargement's
 to entreat,
 The sphere though larger is not more
 complete.
 Now for Mankind's experience: who
 alone
 Might style the unobstructed world
 his own?
 Whom palled Goito with its perfect
 things?
 Sordello's self; whereas for Mankind
 springs
 Salvation—hindrances are interposed
 For them, not all Life's view at once
 disclosed
 To creatures sudden on its summit left
 With Heaven above and—yet of wings
 bereft
 But lower laid, as at the mountain's foot
 Where, range on range, the girdling
 forests shoot
 Between the prospect and the throngs
 who scale
 Earnestly ever, piercing veil by veil,

Confirmed with each discovery; in
 their soul
 The Whole they seek by Parts—but,
 found that Whole,
 Could they revert? Oh, testify! The
 space
 Of time we judge some eagle to embrace
 The Parts, were more than plenty,
 once attained
 The Whole, to quite exhaust it: for
 nought's gained
 But leave to look—not leave to do:
 Beneath
 Soon sates the looker—look Above,
 then! Death
 Tempts ere a tithe of Life be tasted.
 Live
 First, and die soon enough, Sordello!
 Give
 Body and spirit the bare right they
 claim
 To pasture thee on a voluptuous shame
 That thou, a pageant-city's denizen,
 Are neither vilely lodged midst Lom-
 bard men—
 Canst force joy out of sorrow, seem to
 truck
 Thine attributes away for sordid muck.
 Yet manage from that very muck
 educe
 Gold; then subject, nor scruple, to
 thy cruce
 The world's discardings; think, if
 ingots pay
 Such pains, the clods that yielded
 them are clay
 To all save thee, and clay remain
 though quenched
 Thy purging-fire; who's robbed then?
 Would I wrenched
 An ample treasure forth!—As 'tis, why
 crave
 A share that ruins me and will not
 save
 Yourselves?—imperiously command
 I quit
 The course that makes my joy nor
 will remit
 Your woe? Would all arrive at joy?
 Reverse
 The order (time instructs you) nor
 coerce

Each unit till, some predetermined
mode,
The total be emancipate; our road
Is one, our times of travel many;
thwart
No enterprising soul's precocious start
Before the general march; if slow or
fast
All straggle up to the same point at last.
Why grudge my having gained a
month ago
The brakes at balm-shed, asphodels in
blow,
While you were landlocked? Speed
your Then, but how
This badge now suffer you improve
my Now!
His time of action for, against, or
with
Our world (I labour to extract the pith
Of this and more) grew up, that even-
tide,
Gigantic with its power of joy beside
The world's eternity of impotence
To profit though at his whole joy's
expense.
Make nothing of that time because so
brief?
Rather make more—instead of joy
take grief
Before its novelty have time subside;
No time for the late savour—leave
untried
Virtue, the creaming honey wine,
quick squeeze
Vice like a biting spirit from the lees
Of life—together let wrath, hatred,
lust,
All tyrannies in every shape be thrust
Upon this Now, which time may
reason out
As mischiefs, far from benefits, no
doubt—
But long ere then Sordello will have
slipt
Away—you teach him at Goito's crypt
There's a blank issue to that fiery
thrill!
Stirring, the Few cope with the Many,
still:
So much of dust as, quiet, makes a mass
Unable to produce three tufts of grass,

Shall, troubled by the whirlwind,
render void
The whole calm glebe's endeavour:
be employed!
And e'en though somewhat smarts the
Crowd for this,
Contributes each his pang to make up
bliss,
'Tis but one pang—one blood-drop to
the bowl
Which brimful tempts the sluggish asp-
uncowl
So quick, stains ruddily the dull red
cape,
And, kindling orbs dull as the unripe
grape
Before, avails forthwith to disentrance
The mischief—soon to lead a mystic
dance
Among you! Nay, who sits alone in
Rome?
Have those great hands indeed hewn
out a home
For me—compelled to live? Oh Life,
life-breath,
Life-blood,—ere sleep be travail, life
ere death!
This life to feed my soul, direct, oblique,
But always feeding! Hindrances?
They pique—
Helps? such . . . but wherefore say
my soul o'ertops
All height—than every depth pro-
founder drops?
Enough that I can live, and would
live! Wait
For some transcendent life reserved
by Fate
To follow this? Oh, never! Fate
I trust
The same my soul to; for, as who
flings dust
Perchance—so facile was the deed,
she chequed
The void with these materials to affect
That soul diversely—these consigned
anew
To nought by death, what marvel if
she threw
A second and superber spectacle
Before it? What may serve for sun—
what still

Wander a moon above me—what else
 wind
 About me like the pleasures left behind?
 And how shall some new flesh that is
 not flesh
 Cling to me? what's new laughter—
 soothes the fresh
 Sleep like sleep? Fate's exhaustless
 for my sake
 In brave resource, but whether bids
 she slake
 My thirst at this first rivulet or count
 No draught worth lip save from the
 rocky fount
 Above i' the clouds, while here she's
 provident
 Of (taste) loquacious pearl the soft
 tree-tent
 Guards, with its face of reate and
 sedge, nor fail
 The silver globules and gold-sparkling
 grail
 At bottom—Oh, 'twere too absurd to
 slight
 For the hereafter the to-day's delight!
 Quench thirst at this, then seek next
 well-spring—wear
 Home-lilies ere strange lotus in my
 hair!
 Here is the Crowd, whom I with
 freest heart
 Offer to serve, contented for my part
 To give this life up once for all, but
 grant
 I really serve; if otherwise, why want
 Aught further of me? Life they can-
 not chuse
 But set aside—wherefore should I
 refuse
 The gift? I take it—I, for one, engage
 Never to falter through the pilgrim-
 mage—
 Or end it howling that the stock or
 stone
 Were enviable, truly: I, for one,
 Will praise the world you style mere
 anteroom
 To the true palace—but shall I assume
 —My foot the courtly gait, my tongue
 the trope,
 My eye the glance, before the doors
 fly ope

One moment? What - with guarders
 row on row,
 Gay swarms of varletry that come and
 go,
 Pages to dice with, waiting-girls un-
 lace
 The plackets of, pert claimants help
 displace,
 Heart-heavy suitors get a rank for;
 laugh
 At yon sleek parasite, break his own
 staff
 'Cross Beetle-brows the Usher's
 shoulder; why—
 Admitted to the presence by and bye,
 Should thought of these recurring
 make me grieve
 Among new sights I reach, old sights
 I leave?
 Cool citrine-crystals, fierce pyropus-
 stone—
 Bare floor-work too!—But did I let
 alone
 That black-eyed peasant in the vesti-
 bule
 Once and for ever?—Floor-work?
 No such fool!
 Rather, were Heaven to forestall
 Earth, I'd say
 Must I be blessed or you? Then my
 own way
 Bless me—a firmer arm, a fleetier foot,
 I'll thank you, but to no mad wings
 transmute
 These limbs of mine—our greensward
 is too soft;
 Nor camp I on the thunder-cloud
 aloft—
 We feel the bliss distinctlier having thus
 Engines subservient, not mixed up
 with us—
 Better move palpably through Heaven
 —nor, freed
 Of flesh forsooth, from space to space
 proceed
 'Mid flying synods of worlds—but in
 Heaven's marge
 Show Titan still, recumbent o'er his
 targe
 Solid with stars—the Centaur at his
 game
 Made tremulously out in hoary flame!

Life! Yet, the very cup whose
 extreme dull
 Dregs, even, I would quaff, was dashed,
 at full,
 Aside so oft; the death I fly, revealed
 So oft a better life this life concealed
 And which sage, champion, martyr,
 thro' each path
 Have hunted fearlessly—the horrid
 bath,
 The crippling-irons and the fiery chair:
 —'Twas well for them; let me become
 aware
 As they, and I relinquish Life, too!
 Let
 Life's secret but disclose itself! Forget
 Vain ordinances, I have one appeal—
 I feel, am what I feel, know what I
 feel
 —So much is Truth to me—What Is
 then? Since
 One object viewed diversely may evince
 Beauty and ugliness—this way attract,
 That way repel, why gloze upon the
 fact?
 Why must a single of the sides be
 right?
 What bids choose this and leave its
 opposite?
 No abstract Right for me—in youth
 ended
 With Right still present, still to be
 pursued,
 Thro' all the interchange of circles,
 rife
 Each with its proper law and mode of
 life,
 Each to be dwelt at ease in: thus to
 sway
 Regally with the Kaiser, or obey
 Implicit with his Serf of fluttering
 heart,
 Or, like a sudden thought of God's,
 to start
 Up in the presence, then go forth and
 shout
 That some should pick the unstrung
 jewels out—
 Were well!

And, as in moments when
 the Past
 Gave partially enfranchisement, he cast

Himself quite thro' mere secondary
 states
 Of his soul's essence, little loves and
 hates,
 Into the mid vague yearnings overlaid
 By these; as who should pierce hill,
 plain, grove, glade,
 And so into the very nucleus probe
 That first determined there exist a
 Globe:
 And as that's easiest half the globe
 dissolved,
 So seemed Sordello's closing-truth
 evolved
 By his flesh-half's break-up—the sud-
 den swell
 Of his expanding soul showed Ill and
 Well,
 Sorrow and Joy, Beauty and Ugliness
 Virtue and Vice, the Larger and the Less,
 All qualities, in fine, recorded here,
 Might be but Modes of Time and this
 one Sphere.
 Urgent on these but not of force to bind
 As Time—Eternity, as Matter—Mind,
 If Mind, Eternity shall choose assert
 Their attributes within a Life: thus girt
 With circumstance, next change be-
 holds them cinct
 Quite otherwise—with Good and Ill
 distinct,
 Joys, sorrows, tending to a like result—
 Contrived to render easy, difficult,
 This or the other course of . . . what
 new bond
 In place of flesh may stop their flight
 beyond
 Its new sphere, as that course does
 harm or good
 To its arrangements. Once this under-
 stood,
 As suddenly he felt himself alone,
 Quite out of Time and this World all
 was known.
 What made the secret of the past
 despair?
 (Most imminent when he seemed most
 aware
 Of greatness in the Past—nought
 turned him mad
 Like craving to expand the power he
 had,

Not a new power to be expanded)—
just
This made it ; Soul on Matter being
thrust,
'Tis Joy when so much Soul is wreaked
in Time
On Matter,—let the Soul attempt
sublime
Matter beyond its scheme and so pre-
vent
Or more or less that deed's accomplish-
ment,
And Sorrow follows : Sorrow to
avoid—
Let the Employer match the thing
Employed,
Fit to the finite his infinity,
And thus proceed for ever, in degree
Changed but in kind the same, still
limited
To the appointed circumstance and
dead
To all beyond : a sphere is but a
sphere—
Small, Great, are merely terms we
bandy here—
Since to the spirit's absoluteness all
Are like : now of the present sphere
we call
Life, are conditions—take but this
among
Many ; the Body was to be so long
Youthful, no longer—but, since no
control
Tied to that Body's purposes his Soul,
It chose to understand the Body's trade
More than the Body's self—had fain
conveyed
Its boundless, to the body's bounded
lot—
So, the soul permanent, the body not,—
Scarcely the one minute for enjoying
here,
The soul must needs instruct its weak
compeer,
Run o'er its capabilities and wring
A joy thence it holds worth experi-
encing—
Which, far from half discovered even,
—lo,
The minute gone, the body's power's
let go

Apportioned to that joy's acquirement !
Broke,
Say, morning o'er the earth and all it
woke—
From the volcano's vapour-flag to
hoist
Black o'er the spread of sea, to one
low moist
Dale's silken barley-spikes sullied with
rain,
Swayed earthwards, heavily to rise
again—
(The Small sphere as perfect as the
Great
To the soul's absoluteness)—meditate
On such an Autumn-morning's cluster-
chord
And the whole music it was framed
afford,
And, the chord's might discovered,
what should pluck
One string, the finger, was found
palsy-struck.
And then what marvel if the Spirit,
shown
A saddest sight—the Body lost alone
Thro' its officious proffered help,
deprived
Of this and that enjoyment Fate con-
trived,
Virtue, Good, Beauty, each allowed
slip hence,—
Vaingloriously were fain, for recom-
pense,
To stem the ruin even yet, protract
The Body's term, supply the power it
lacked
From its infinity, compel it learn
These qualities were only Time's con-
cern,
That Body may, with its assistance,
barred—
Advance the same, vanquished—obtain
reward,
Reap joy where sorrow was intended
grow,
Of Wrong made Right and turn Ill
Good below—
And the result is, the poor Body
soon
Sinks under what was meant a won-
drous boon,

Leaving its bright accomplice all agast.
So much was plain then, proper in
the Past ;

To be complete for, satisfy the whole
Series of spheres—Eternity, his soul
Exceeded, so was incomplete for, each
One sphere—our Time. But does our
knowledge reach

No farther? Is the cloud of hindrance
broke

But by the failing of the fleshly yoke,
Its loves and hates, as now when they
let soar

The spirit, self-sufficient as before,
Tho' but the single space that shall
elapse

'Twixt its enthrallment in new bonds
perhaps?

Must Life be ever but escaped, which
should

Have been enjoyed? nay, might have
been and would,

Once ordered rightly, and a Soul's no
whit

More than the Body's purpose under it
(A breadth of watery heaven like a bay,
A sky-like space of water, ray for ray
And star for star, one richness where
they mixed

As this and that wing of an angel, fixed,
Tumultuary splendours folded in
To die) and which thus, far from first
begin

Exciting discontent, but surest quelled
The Body if aspiring it rebelled.

But how so order Life? Still brutalize
The soul, the sad world's method—
muffled eyes

To all that was before, shall after be
This sphere—and every other quality
Save some sole and immutable Great
and Good

And Beauteous whither fate has loosed
its hood

To follow? Never may some soul see
All

—The Great before and after and the
Small

Now, yet be saved by this the simplest
lore,

And take the single course prescribed
before,

As the king-bird with ages on his plumes
Travels to die in his ancestral glooms?
But where desery the Love that shall
select

That course? Here is a Soul whom
to affect

Nature has plied with all her means—
from trees

And flowers—e'en to the Multitude
. . . and these

Decides he save or no? One word
to end!

Ah my Sordello, I this once befriend
And speak for you. A Power above
him still

Which, utterly incomprehensible,
Is out of rivalry, which thus he can
Love, tho' unloving all conceived by
Man—

What need! And of—none the
minutest duct

To that out-Nature, nought that would
instruct

And so let rivalry begin to live—
But of a Power its representative
Who, being for authority the same,
Communication different, should claim
A course the first chose and this last
revealed—

This Human clear, as that Divine con-
cealed—

The utter need!

What has Sordello found?
Or can his spirit go the mighty round
At length, end where our souls begun?
as says

Old fable, the two doves were sent
two ways

About the world—where in the midst
they met

Tho' on a shifting waste of sand, men set
Jove's temple? Quick, what has
Sordello found?

For they approach—approach—that
foot's rebound . . .

Palma? No, Salinguerra tho' in mail;
They mount, have reached the thresh-
hold, dash the veil

Aside—and you divine who sat there
dead

Under his foot the badge; still, Palma
said,

A triumph lingering in the wide eyes
Wider than some spent swimmer's if
 he spies
Help from above in his extreme de-
spair,
And, head far back on shoulder thrust,
 turns there
With short quick passionate cry ; as
 Palma prest
In one great kiss her lips upon his
 breast
It beat By this the hermit-bee has
 stopped
His day's toil at Goito—the new-
 cropped
Dead vine-leaf answers, now 'tis eve,
 he bit.
Twirled so, and filed all day—the
 mansion's fit -
God counselled for ; as easy guess the
 word
That passed betwixt them and be-
 come the third
To the soft small unfrighted bee, as
 tax
Him with one fault—so no remem-
 brance racks
Of the stoue maidens and the font of
 stone
He, creeping thro' the crevice, leaves
 alone—
Alas, my friend—Alas Sordello! whom
Anon we laid within that cold font-
 tomb
And yet again alas !
 And now is't worth
Our while bring back to mind, much
 less set forth
How Salinguerra extricates himself
Without Sordello? Ghibellin and
 Guelf
May fight their fiercest? If Count
 Richard sulked
In durance, or the Marquis paid his
 mult,
Who cares, Sordello gone? The up-
 shot, sure,
Was peace; our chief made some
 frank overture
That prospered ; compliment fell thick
 and fast
On its disposer, and Taurello passed

With foe and friend for an outstrip-
 ping soul
Nine days at least : then, fairly
 reached the goal,
He, by one effort, blotted the great
 hope
Out of his mind, no further tried to
 cope
With Este that mad evening's style,
 but sent
Away the Legate and the League,
 content
No blame at least the brothers had
 incurred,
—Despatched a message to the Monk
 he heard
Patiently first to last, scarce shivered
 at,
Then curled his limbs up on his wolf-
 skin mat
And ne'er spoke more,—informed the
 Ferrarese
He but retained their rule so long as
 these
Lingered in pupilage—and last, no
 mode
Apparent else of keeping safe the road
From Germany direct to Lombardy
For Friedrich, none, that is, to
 guarantee
The faith and promptitude of who
 should next
Obtain Sofia's dowry, sore perplexed—
(Sofia being youngest of the tribe
Of daughters Ecelin was wont to bribe
The envious magnates with—nor since
 he sent
Enrico Egna this fair child had Trent
Once failed the Kaiser's purposes—
 we lost
Egna last year, and who takes Egna's
 post—
Opens the Lombard gate if Friedrich
 knock ?)
Himself espoused the Lady of the Rock
In pure necessity, and so destroyed
His slender last of chances, quite made
 void
Old prophecy, and spite of all the
 schemes
Overt and covert, youth's deeds, age's
 dreams,

Was sucked into Romano : and so
hushed

He up this evening's work, that when,
'twas brushed

Somehow against by a blind chronicle
Which, chronicling whatever woe befell
Ferrara, scented this the obscure woe
And "Salinguerra's sole son Giacomo
Deceased, fatuous and doting, ere his
Sire,"

The townsfolk rubbed their eyes, could
but admire

Which of Sofia's five he meant. The
chaps

Of his dead hope were tardy to collapse,
Obliterated not the beautiful
Distinctive features at a crash—scarce
dull

Next year, as Azzo, Boniface withdrew
Each to his stronghold ; then (securely
too

Ecelin at Campese slept—close by
Who likes may see him in Solagna lie
With cushioned head and gloved hand
to denote

The Cavalier he was)—then his heart
smote

Young Ecelin conceive ! Long since
adult,

And, save Vicenza's business, what
result

In blood and blaze ? so hard 'twas
intercept

Sordello till Sordello's option. Stept
Its lord on Lombardy—for in the nick
Of time when he at last and Alberic
Closed with Taurello, came precisely
news

That in Verona half the souls refuse
Allegiance to the Marquis and the
Count—

Have cast them from a throne they
bid him mount,

Their Podestà, thro' his ancestral worth:
Ecelin flew there, and the town hence-
forth

Was wholly his—Taurello sinking back
From temporary station to a track
That suited : news received of this ac-
quist,

Friedrich did come to Lombardy—
who missed

Taurello ? Yet another year—they took
Vicenza, left the Marquis scarce a nook
For refuge, and, when hundreds two
or three

After conspired to call themselves
"the Free,"

Opposing Alberic, these Bassanese,
(Without Sordello !)—Ecelin at ease
Slaughtered them so observably that
oft

A little Salinguerra looked with soft
Blue eyes up, asked his sire the proper
age

To get appointed his proud uncle's
page :

More years passed, and that sire was
dwindled down

To a mere showy turbulent soldier,
grown

Better through age, his parts still in
repute,

Subtle—how else ?—but hardly so
astute

As his contemporaneous friends pro-
fessed—

Undoubtedly a brawler—for the rest,
Known by each neighbour, so allowed
for, let

Keep his incorrigible ways, nor fret
Men who had missed their boyhood's
bugbear—trap

The ostrich, suffer our bald osprey flap
A battered pinion—was the word. In
fine,

One flap too much and Venice's marine
Was meddled with ; no overlooking
that !

We captured him in his Ferrara, fat
And florid at a banquet, more by fraud
Than force, to speak the truth—there's
slender laud

Ascribed you for assisting eighty years
To pull his death on such a man—fate
shears

The life-cord prompt enough whose
last fine threads

You fritter : so, presiding his board-
head,

A great smile your assurance all went
well

With Friedrich (as if he were like to
tell !)

In rushed (a plan contrived before)
 our friends,
 Made some pretence at fighting, just
 amends
 For the shame done his eighty years
 —apart
 The principle, none found it in his
 heart
 To be much angry with Taurello—
 gained
 Our galleys with the prize, and what
 remained
 But carry him to Venice for a show?
 —Set him, as 'twere, down gently—
 free to go
 His gait, inspect our square, pretend
 observe
 The swallows soaring their eternal
 curve
 Twixt Theodore and Mark, if citizens
 Gathered importunately, fives and tens,
 To point their children the Magnifico,
 All but a monarch once in firm-land, go
 His gait among them now—it took,
 indeed,
 Fully this Ecelin to supersede
 That man, remarked the seniors.
 Singular
 Sordello's inability to bar
 Rivals the stage, that evening, mainly
 brought
 About by his strange disbelief that
 aught
 Was to be done, should fairly thrust
 the Twain
 Under Taurello's tutelage, that, brain
 And heart and hand, be forthwith in
 one rod
 Indissolubly bound to baffle God
 Who loves the world—should thus
 allow the thin
 Grey wizened dwarfish devil Ecelin,
 And massy-muscled big-boned Alberic
 (Mere man, alas) to put his problem
 quick
 To demonstration—prove wherever's
 will
 To do, there's plenty to be done, or ill
 Or good : anointed, then, to rend
 and rip—
 Kings of the gag and flesh-hook, screw
 and whip,

They plagued the world : a touch of
 His wand
 (So far obsolete!) made Lombards
 band
 Together, cross their coats as for
 Christ's cause,
 And saving Milan win the world's ap-
 plause,
 Ecelin perished : and I think grass
 grew
 Never so pleasant as in Valley Rù
 By San Zenon where Alberic in turn
 Saw his exasperated captors burn
 Seven children with their mother,
 and, regaled
 So far, tied on to a wild horse, was
 trailed
 To death through raunce and bramble-
 bush : I take
 God's part and testify that mid the
 brake
 Wild o'er his castle on Zenone's knoll
 You hear its one tower left, a belfry,
 toll—
 Chirrup the contumacious grass-
 hopper,
 Rustles the lizards and the cushats
 chirre
 Above the ravage : there, at deep of day
 A week since, heard I the old Canon
 say
 He saw with his own eyes a barrow
 burst
 And Alberic's huge skeleton unheard
 Five years ago, no more : he added,
 June's
 A month for carding off our first
 cocoons
 The silkworms fabricate—a double
 news,
 Nor he nor I could tell the worthier.
 Choose !
 And Naddo gone, all's gone ; not
 Eglamor !
 Believe I knew the face I waited for,
 A guest my spirit of the golden courts :
 Oh strange to see how, despite ill-
 reports,
 Disuse, some wear of years, that face
 retained
 Its joyous look of love ! Suns waxed
 and waned,

And still my spirit held an upward
flight,
Spiral on spiral, gyres of life and light
More and more gorgeous—ever that
face there
The last admitted ! crossed, too, with
some care
As perfect triumph were not sure for
all,
But on a few enduring damp must
fall,
A transient struggle, haply a painful
sense
Of the inferior nature's clinging—
whence
Slight starting tears easily wiped away,
Fine jealousies soon stifled in the play
Of irrepressible admiration—not
Aspiring, all considered, to their lot
Who ever, just as they prepare ascend
Spiral on spiral, wish thee well, im-
pend
Thy frank delight at their exclusive
track,
That upturned fervid face and hair put
back !
Is there no more to say ? He of the
rhymes—
Many a tale of this retreat betimes
Was born : Sordello die at once for
men ?
The Chroniclers of Mantua tired their
pen
Relating how a Prince Visconti saved
Mantua and elsewhere notably be-
haved—
Who thus by fortune's ordering events
Passed with posterity to all intents
For just the God he never could be-
come :
As Knight, Bard, Gallant, men were
never dumb
In praise of him : while what he should
have been,
Could be, and was not—the one step
too mean
For him to take, we suffer at this day
Because of ; Ecelin had pushed away
Its chance ere Dante could arrive to
take
That step Sordello spurned, for the
world's sake :

He did much—but Sordello's step was
gone.
Thus had Sordello ta'en that step
alone,
Apollo had been compassed—'twas a
fit
He wished should go to him, not he
to it
—As one content to merely be sup-
posed
Singing or fighting elsewhere, while
he dozed
Really at home—one who was chiefly
glad
To have achieved the few real deeds
he had
Because that way assured they were
not worth
Doing, so spared from doing them
henceforth—
A tree that covets fruitage and yet
tastes
Never itself, itself—had he embraced
Their cause then, Men had plucked
Hesperian fruit
And, praising that, just thrown him
in to boot
All he was anxious to appear but scarce
Solicitous to be : a sorry farce
Such life is after all—cannot I say
He lived for some one better thing ?
this way—
Lo, on a heathy brown and nameless
hill
By sparkling Asolo, in mist and chill,
Morning just up, higher and higher runs
A child barefoot and rosy—See ! the
sun's
On the square castle's inner-court's
green wall
—Like the chine of some fossil animal
Half turned to earth and flowers ;
and thro' the haze
(Save where some slender patches of
grey maize
Are to be overleaped) that boy has crost
The whole hill-side of dew and
powder-frost
Matting the balm and mountain
camomile :
Up and up goes he, singing all the
while

Some unintelligible words to beat
 The lark, God's poet, swooning at his
 feet
 So worsted is he at the few fine locks
 Stained like pale honey oozed from
 topmost rocks
 Sunblanched the livelong summer.—
 All that's left
 Of the Goito lay ! And thus bereft,
 Sleep and forget, Sordello . . . in
 effect
 He sleeps, the feverish poet—I suspect
 Not utterly companionless ; but,
 friends,
 Wake up ; the ghost's gone, and the
 story ends
 I'd fain hope, sweetly—seeing, peri or
 ghoul,
 That spirits are conjectured fair or foul,

Evil or good, judicious authors
 think,
 According as they vanish in a
 stink
 Or in a perfume : friends be frank ;
 ye snuff
 Civet, I warrant : really ? Like
 enough—
 Merely the savour's rareness—any
 nose—
 May ravage with impunity a rose—
 Rifle a musk-pod and 'twill' ache like
 yours :
 I'd tell you that same pungency
 ensures
 An after-gust, but that were over-
 bold :
 Who would has heard Sordello's story
 told.



PIPPA PASSES

A DRAMA

I DEDICATE

BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM, MOST ADMIRINGLY
TO THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"—

MOST AFFECTIONATELY TO

MR. SEYMOUR TALFOURD

R. B.

PIPPA PASSES

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE
TREVISAN.—*A large, mean, airy
chamber. A girl, PIPPA, from the
silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY !

Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last ;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's
brim

Where spurting and supprest it lay—
For not a froth-flake touched the
rim

Of yonder gap in the solid grey
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away ;
But forth one wavelet, then another,
curled,

Till the whole sunrise, not to be sup-
prest,

Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then
overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of
thee,

A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,
(Be they grants thou art bound to, or
gifts above measure)

One of thy choices, or one of thy
chances,

(Be they tasks God imposed thee, or
freaks at thy pleasure)

—My Day, if I squander such labour
or leisure,

Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief
on me !

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely
flowing,

Whence earth, we feel, gets steady
help and good—

Thy fitful sunshine minutes, coming,
going,

In which, earth turns from work in
gamesome mood—

All shall be mine ! But thou must
treat me not

As the prosperous are treated, those
who live

At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou re-
fusest,

For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's
sorrow,

Cast off last night, will come again to-
morrow—

Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall
borrow

Sufficient strength of thee for new-
year's sorrow.

All other men and women that this
earth

Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular
dearth,

Get more joy, one way, if another, less :
Thou art my single day, God lends to
leaven

What were all earth else, with a feel
of heaven ;

Sole light that helps me through the
year, thy sun's !

Try, now ! Take Asolo's Four
Happiest Ones—

And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima ; can rain dis-
turb

Her Sebald's homage ? All the while
thy rain

Beats fiercest on her shrub-house
window-pane,

He will but press the closer, breathe
 more warm
 Against her cheek ; how should she
 mind the storm ?
 And, ir rning past, if mid-day shed
 a gloom
 O'er Jules and Phene,—what care
 bride and groom
 Save for their dear selves ? 'Tis their
 marriage-day ;
 And while they leave church, and go
 home their way
 Hand clasping hand,—within each
 breast would be
 Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite
 of thee !
 Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
 With mist,—will Luigi and his mother
 grieve—
 The Lady and her child, unmatched,
 forsooth,
 She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
 For true content ? The cheerful town,
 warm, close,
 And safe, the sooner that thou art
 morose
 Receives them ! And yet once again,
 outbreak
 In storm at night on Monsignor, they
 make
 Such stir about,—whom they expect
 from Rome
 To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
 And say here masses proper to release
 A soul from pain,—what storm dares
 hurt his peace ?
 Calm would he pray, with his own
 thoughts to ward
 Thy thunder off, nor want the angels'
 guard !
 But Pippa—just one such mischance
 would spoil
 Her day that lightens the next twelve-
 month's toil
 At wearisome silk-winding, coil on
 coil !
 And here I let time slip for nought !
 Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam—caught
 With a single splash from my ewer !
 You that would mock the best pursuer
 Was my basin over-deep ?
 One splash of water ruins you asleep,

And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
 Wheeling and counterwheeling,
 Reeling, broken beyond healing—
 Now grow together on the ceiling !
 That will task your wits !
 Whoever quenched fire first, hoped to
 see
 Morsel after morsel flee
 As merrily, as giddily . . .
 Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
 Where settles by degrees the radiant
 cripple ?
 Oh, is it surely blown, my marta-
 gon ?
 New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes'
 nipple,
 Plump as the flesh-bunch on some
 Turk bird's poll !
 Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the
 ripple
 Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch
 unroll
 Such turban-flowers ; I say, such
 lamps disperse
 Thick red flame through that dusk
 green universe !
 I am queen of thee, floweret ;
 And each fleshy blossom
 Preserve I not—(safer
 Than leaves that embower it,
 Or shells that embosom)
 —From weevil and chafer ?
 Laugh through my pane, then ;
 solicit the bee ;
 Gibe him, be sure ; and, in midst
 of thy glee,
 Love thy queen, worship me !
 —Worship whom else ? For am I
 not, this day,
 What'er I please ? What shall I
 please to-day ?
 My morning, noon, eve, night—how
 spend my day ?
 To-morrow I must be Pippa who
 winds silk,
 The whole year round, to earn just
 bread and milk :
 But, this one day, I have leave
 to go,
 And play out my fancy's fullest
 games ;

I may fancy all day—and it shall
be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am
called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the Hill-side yonder, through
the morning,
Some one shall love me, as the world
calls love:
I am no less than Ottima, take warn-
ing!
The gardens, and the great stone house
above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass
in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he
is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet re-
poses;
And therefore, till the shrub-house
door uncloses,
I . . . what, now?—give abundant
cause for prate
About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,
Too bold, too confident she'll still face
down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town—
How we talk in the little town below!
But love, love, love—there's better
love, I know!
This foolish love was only day's first
offer;
I choose my next love to defy the
scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom
sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley—
Why should I not be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride—
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one
flash
Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and
black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eye-
lash:
I wonder she contrives those lids no
dresses!
So strict was she, the veil
should cover close her pale

Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and
scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules!—for
are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every
feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily
of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead!
Whiteness in us were wonderful in-
deed—
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets
like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules
a bliss
So startling as her real first infant
kiss?
Oh, no—not envy, this!

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round
from the beginning
As little fear of losing it as winning!
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate
their wives,
And only parents' love can last our
lives:
Ateve the son and mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our Turret; what
prevents
My being Luigi? while that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time, is
stirred
With each to each imparting sweet
intentions
For this new-year, as brooding bird
to bird—
(For I observe of late, the evening
walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they
talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind
than friends)

Let me be cared about, kept out of
harm,

And schemed for, safe in love as with
a charm;

Let me be Luigi! . . . If I only knew
What was my mother's face my
father, too!

Nay, if you come to that, best love of
all

Is God's; then why not have God's
love befall

Myself as, in the Palace by the Dome,
Monsignor?—who to-night will bless
the home

Of his dead brother: and God will
bless in turn

That heart which beats, those eyes
which mildly burn

With love for all men: I, to-night at
least,

Would be that holy and beloved
priest!

Now wait!—even I already seem to
share

In God's love: what does New-year's
hymn declare?

What other meaning do these verses
bear?

*All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and
worst,*

*Are we; there is no last nor first.
Say not "a small event!" Why
"small"?*

*Costs it more pain than this, ye call
"great event," should come to pass,
Than that?—Untwine me from the
mass*

*Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in, or exceed!*

And more of it, and more of it!—oh,
yes—

I will pass by, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great,
no doubt,

Useful to men, and dear to God, as
they!

A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!

But let the sun shine! Wherefore
repine?

—With thee to lead me, O Day of
mine,

Down the grass-path grey with
dew,

Under the pine-wood, blind with
boughs,

Where the swallow never flew
As yet, nor cicale dared carouse

Dared carouse!

[She enters the street.

I.—MORNING

*Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-
house. LUCA'S Wife, OTTIMA,
and her Paramour, the German
SEBALD.*

*Seb. (sings).
Let her watching this wink!
Day's a-blaze with eyes, think—
Deep into the night, drink!*

*Otti. Night? Such may be your
Rhine-land nights, perhaps;*

*But this blood-red beam through the
shutter's chink,*

*—We call such light, the morning's:
let us see!*

*Mind how you grope your way, though!
How these tall*

*Naked geraniums straggle! Push the
lattice—*

*Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid
you?—Sebald,*

*It shakes the dust down on me! Why,
of course*

*The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are you
content,*

*Or must I find you something else to
spoil?*

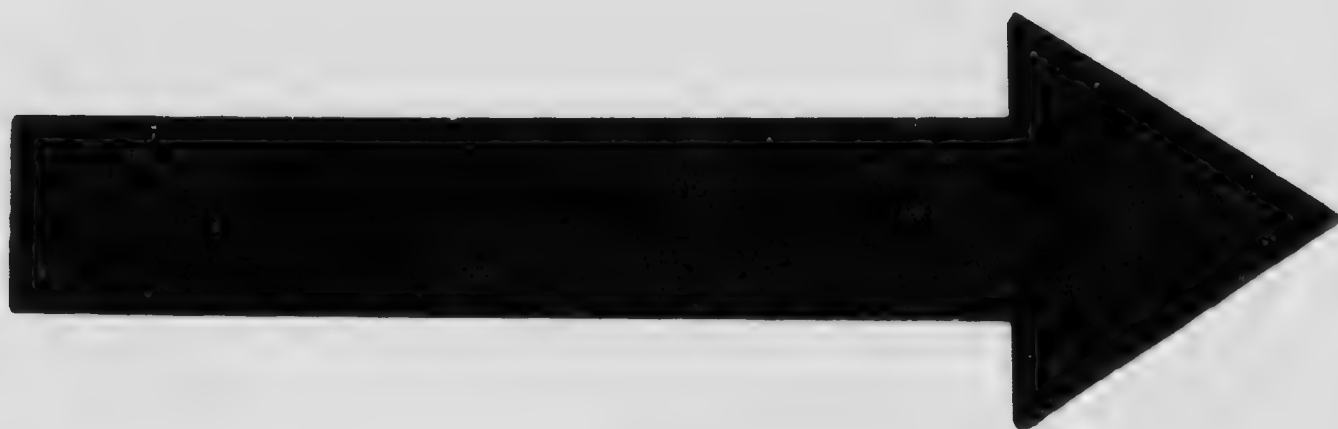
*Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is
it full morning?*

Oh, don't speak then!

*Seb. Ay, thus it used to be!
Ever your house was, I remember, shut*

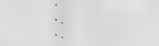
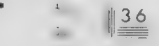
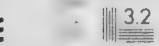
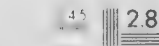
Till mid-day—I observed that, as I strolled
 On mornings thro' the vale here :
 country girls
 Were noisy, washing garments in the brook
 Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills
 But no, your house was mute, would open no eye
 And wisely—you were plotting one thing there,
 Nature, another outside : I looked up—
 Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
 Silent as death, blind in a flood of light ;
 Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed
 And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife!"
 This house was his, this chair, this window—his!
Otti. Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's :
 That black streak is the belfry. Stop :
 Vicenza
 Should lie . . . There's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
 Look o'er my shoulder—follow my finger—
Seb. Morning?
 It seems to me a night with a sun added :
 Where's dew? where's freshness?
 That bruised plant, I bruised
 In getting thro' the lattice yestereve,
 Droops as it did. See, here's my elbow's mark
 In the dust on the sill.
Otti. Oh shut the lattice, pray!
Seb. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
 Foul as the morn may be—
 There, shut the world out!
 How do you feel now, Ottima? There—
 —curse
 The world, and all outside! Let us throw off
 This mask : how do you bear yourself?
 Let's out
 With all of it!
Otti. Best never speak of it.

Seb. Best speak again and yet again of it,
 Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
 For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"
 And nothing more. Notice—I'll say them now,
 "His blood."
Otti. Assuredly if I repented
 The deed—
Seb. Repent? who should repent, or why?
 What puts that in your head? Did I once say
 That I repented?
Otti. No—I said the deed—
Seb. "The deed," and "the event"—just now it was
 "Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!
 Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
 I am his cut-throat, you are—
Otti. Here is the wine—
 I brought it when we left the house above—
 And glasses too—wine of both sorts.
 Black? white, then?
Seb. But am not I his cut-throat?
 What are you?
Otti. There, trudges on his business from the Duomo
 Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
 And bare feet—always in one place at church,
 Close under the stone wall by the south entry ;
 I used to take him for a brown cold piece
 Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
 To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—
 Now—so has that dumb figure fastened on me—
 I rather should account the plastered wall
 A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
 This, Sebald?
Seb. No—the white wine—the white wine!
 Well, Ottima, I promised no new year



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2



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Should rise on us the ancient shameful
way,

Nor does it rise : pour on ! To your
black eyes !

Do you remember last damned New
Year's day ?

Otti. You brought those foreign
prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to
scheme

To get him from the fire. Nothing
but saying

His own set wants the proof-mark,
roused him up

To hunt them out.

Seb. Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face !

Otti. Do you
Fondle me, then ! who means to take
your life

For that, my Sebald ?

Seb. Hark you, Ottima,
One thing's to guard against. We'll
not make much

One of the other—that is, not make
more

Parade of warmth, childish officious
coil,

Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I sup-
posed

Proof upon proof was needed now,
now first,

To show I love you—yes, still love
you—love you

In spite of Luca and what's come to
him

—Sure sign we had him ever in our
thoughts.

White sneering old reproachful face
and all !

We'll even quarrel, love, at times,
as if

We still could lose each other—were
not tied

By this—conceive you ?

Otti. Love—

Seb. Not tied so sure—
Because tho' I was wrought upon—
have struck

His insolence back into him—ah !
So surely yours?—therefore, for ever
yours ?

Otti. Love, to be wise, (one counsel
pays another)

Should we have—months ago—when
first we loved,

For instance that May morning we
two stolk

Under the green ascent of sycamores—
If we had come upon a thing like that

Suddenly—

Seb. "A thing" . . . there again
—"a thing !"

Otti. Then, Venus' body, had we
come upon

My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered
corpse

Within there, at his couch-foot,
covered close

Would you have pored upon it ?
Why persist

In poring now upon it ? For 'tis here—
As much as there in the deserted
house—

You cannot rid your eyes of it : for me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse—I

hate—

Dare you stay here ? I would go
back and hold

His two dead hands, and say, I hate
you worse

Luca, than—

Seb. Off, off ; take your hands
off mine !

'Tis the hot evening—off ! oh, morn-
ing, is it ?

Otti. There's one thing must be
done—you know what thing.

Come in and help to carry. We may
sleep

Anywhere in the whole wide house
to-night.

Seb. What would come, think you,
if we let him lie

Just as he is ? Let him lie there
until

The angels take him : he is turned
by this

Off from his face, beside, as you will
see.

Otti. This dusty pane might serve
for looking-glass.

Three, four—four grey hairs ! Is it
so you said

A plait of hair should wave across
my neck?

No—this way!

Sch.

Ottima, I would give

your neck,

Each splendid shoulder, both those
breasts of yours,

That this were undone! Killing?

Kill the world!

So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to
sputter

His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and
feign

Surprise that I returned at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering
here—

Bid me dispatch my business and be-
gone.

I would—

Otti.

See!

Sch.

No, I'll finish! Do

you think

I fear to speak the bare truth once
for all?

All we have talked of is, at bottom,
fine

To suffer—there's a recompense in
guilt;

One must be venturous and fortunate—

What is one young for, else? In age
we'll sigh

O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days
flown over;

Still we have lived! The vice was
in its place.

But to have eaten Luca's bread, have
worn

His clothes, have felt his money swell
my purse—

Do lovers in romances sin that way?

Why I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music—starving while

you plucked me

These flowers to smell!

Otti.

My poor lost friend!

Sch.

He gave me

Life—nothing less: what if he did
reproach

My perfidy, and threaten, and do
more—

Had he no right? What was to
wonder at?

He sate by us at table quietly—

Why must you lean across till our
cheeks touch'd?

Could he do less than make pretence
to strike me?

'Tis not for the crime's sake—I'd
commit ten crimes

Greater, to have this crime wiped
out—undone!

And you—O, how feel you? feel you
for me?

Otti. Well, then—I love you better
now than ever—

And best (look at me while I speak
to you)—

Best for the crime—nor do I grieve,
in truth,

This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,

Falls off our crime; this naked crime
of ours

May not, now, be looked over—look
it down, then!

Great? let it be great—but the joys
it brought,

Pay they or no its price? Come—
they or it!

Speak not! The past, would you
give up the past

Such as it is, pleasure and crime
together?

Give up that noon I owned my love
for you—

The garden's silence—even the single
bee

Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt
And where he hid you only could
surmise

By some campanula's chalice set
a-swing

As he clung there—"Yes, I love you!"

Sch.

And I drew

Back; put far back your face with
both my hands

Lest you should grow too full of me
—your face

So seemed athirst for my whole soul
and body!

Otti. And when I ventured to re-
ceive you here,

Made you steal hither in the morn-
ings—

Seb. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-
house here.
Till the red fire on its glazed windows
spread
To a yellow haze?
Otti. Ah! my sign was
the sun
Inflamed the sore side of yon chestnut-
tree
Nipt by the first frost.
Seb. You would always
laugh
At my wet boots—I had to stride
thro' grass
Over my ankles.
Otti. Then our crowning night—
Seb. The July night?
Otti. The day of it too, Sebald!
When the heaven's pillars seemed
o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy seemed let de-
scend
Close on us both, to weigh down
each to each.
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
Seb. How it came!
Otti. Buried in woods we lay, you
recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest over-
head;
And ever and anon some bright white
shaft
Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here
burnt and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close
wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon
at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then
broke
The thunder like a whole sea over-
head—
Seb. Yes!
Otti.—While I stretched myself
upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot
mouth, and shook
All my locks loose, and covered you
with them—
You, Sebald, the same you

Seb. Slower, Ottima—
Otti. And as we lay—
Seb. Less vehemently! Love me—
Forgive me—take not words—mere
words—to heart
Your breath is worse than wine!
Breathe slow, speak slow
Do not lean on me
Otti. Sebald, as we lay.
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now—
'tis right to die!"
Right to be punished—nought com-
pletes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?
Seb. How did we ever rise?
Was't that we slept? Why did it end?
Otti. I felt you,
Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled
ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your
humid lips—
(My hair is fallen now—knot it again!)
Seb. I kiss you now, dear Ottima,
now, and now!
This way? Will you forgive me—be
once more
My great queen?
Otti. Bind it thrice about
my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's
arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
Seb. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's
arbitress,
Magnificent—
(From without is heard the voice
of PIPPA, singing
The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Mornin'g's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!
(PIPPA passes.)
Seb. God's in his heaven! Do you
hear that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke !

Otti. Oh — that little ragged girl !

She must have rested on the step—we give them

But this one holiday the whole year round.

Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside ?

There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.

She stoops to pick my double hearts-ease . . . Sh !

She does not hear—you call out louder !

Seb. Leave me !

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders !

Otti. Sebald ?

Seb. Wipe off that paint. I hate you !

Otti. Miserable !

Seb. My God ! and she is emptied of it now !

Outright now !—how miraculously gone

All of the grace—had she not strange grace once ?

Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,

No purpose holds the features up together,

Only the cloven brow and puckered chin

Stay in their places—and the very hair,

That seemed to have a sort of life in it, Drops, a dead web !

Otti. Speak to me—

—speak not of me !

Seb. —That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle

Broke the delicious indolence—all broken !

Otti. To me — not of me !—ungrateful, perjured cheat . . .

A coward, too — but ingrate's worse than all !

Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie !

Leave me !—betray me !—I can see your drift—

A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks !

Seb. My God !

Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—

I should have known there was no blood beneath !

Otti. You hate me, then ? You hate me then ?

Seb. To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,

And fascinate by sinning ; and show herself

Superior—Guilt from its excess, superior

To Innocence. That little peasant's voice

Has righted all again. Though I be lost,

I know which is the better, never fear, Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,

Nature, or trick—I see what I have done,

Entirely now ! Oh, I am proud to feel Such torments—let the world take credit thence—

I, having done my deed, pay too its price !

I hate, hate—curse you ! God's in his heaven !

Otti. —Me !

Me ! no, no, Sebald—not yourself—kill me !

Mine is the whole crime—do but kill me—then

Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak—

I always meant to kill myself—wait, you !

Lean on my breast—not as a breast ; don't love me

The more because you lean on me, my own

Heart's Sebald ! There—there—both deaths presently !

Seb. My brain is drowned now

quite drowned : all I feel

Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals, A hurrying-down within me, as of waters

Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit—

There they go—whirls from a black,
 very sea!

Gott. Not to me, God—to him be
 merciful!

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is pass-
 ing from the Hillside to Orlean.
 Foreign Students of Painting and
 Sculpture, from Venice, asembled
 opposite the House of JULES, a
 young French Statuary.*

1st Student. Attention! my own
 post is beneath this window, but the
 pomegranate clump yonder will hide
 three or four of you with a little
 squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe
 must lie flat in the balcony. Four,
 five—who's a defaulter? We want
 everybody, for Jules must not be
 suffered to hurt his bride when the
 jest's found out.

2nd Stud. All here! Only our
 poet's away—never having much
 meant to be present, moonstrike him!
 The airs of that fellow, that Giova-
 chino! He was in violent love with
 himself, and had a fair prospect of
 thriving in his suit, so unmolested was
 it,—when suddenly a woman falls in
 love with him, too; and out of pure
 jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste,
 immortal poem and all—whereto is
 this prophetic epitaph appended
 already, as Bluphocks assures me

*"Here a mammoth-poem lies,—Fouled
 to death by butterflies."* His own
 fault, the simpleton! Instead of
 cramp couplets, each like a knife in
 your entrails, he should write, says
 Bluphocks, both classically and intelli-
 gibly.—*Æsculapius, an Epic. Cata-
 logue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—
 One strip Cools your lip. Phabus'
 emulsion—One bottle Clears your
 throttle. Mercury's lotus—One box
 Cures . . .*

3rd Stud. Subside, my fine fellow!
 If the marriage was over by ten
 o'clock, Jules will certainly be here
 in a minute with his bride.

2nd Stud. Good!—Only, so should

the poet's muse have been universally
 acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus
 n. tris . . .* and Delia not better
 known to our literary dogs than the
 boy Giovacchino!

1st Stud. To the point, now.
 Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer?
 Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has
 called down this piece of friendly
 vengeance on Jules, of which we now
 assemble to witness the winding-up.
 We are all agreed, all in a tale, ob-
 serve, when Jules shall burst out on
 us in a fury by-and-by: I am spokes-
 man—the verses that are to undeceive
 Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but
 each professes himself alike insulted
 by this strutting stone-squarer, who
 came singly from Paris to Munich,
 and thence with a crowd of us to
 Venice and Possagno here, but pro-
 ceeds in a day or two alone again—
 oh, alone, indubitably!—to Rome and
 Florence. He, forsooth, take up his
 portion with these dissolute, brutal-
 ised, heartless bunglers!—So he was
 heard to call us all: now, is Schramm
 brutalised, I should like to know?
 Am I heartless?

Gott. Why, somewhat heartless;
 for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much
 as you choose, still, for this mere cox-
 combry, you will have brushed off—
 what do folks style it?—the bloom of
 his life. Is it too late to alter? These
 love-letters, now, you call his . . . I
 can't laugh at them.

4th Stud. Because you never read
 the sham letters of our inditing which
 drew forth these.

Gott. His discovery of the truth
 will be frightful.

4th Stud. That's the joke. But you
 should have joined us at the begin-
 ning: there's no doubt he loves the
 girl—loves a model he might hire by
 the hour!

Gott. See here! "He has been
 accustomed," he writes, "to have
 Canova's women about him, in stone,
 and the world's women beside him, in
 flesh; these being as much below, as

those, above—his soul's aspiration : but now he is to have the real." . . . There you laugh again ! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Stud. Schramm ! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—will Jules lose the bloom of his youth ?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world : look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time ; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue ? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on ! Has a man done wondering at women ?—There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men ?—There's God to wonder at : and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

1st Stud. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again ! There, you see ! Well, this—Jules . . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day ! Canova's gallery—you know : there he marches first resolutely past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye : all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—"In your new place, beauty ? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you !" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group ; by which

gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length ! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble !

5th Stud. Tell him about the women—go on to the women !

1st Stud. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish ? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least : he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek—girl at Malamocco ; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows !—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the academy, and my picture was nothing to it—a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina, my little friend of the *Finica*, transcribes divinely). And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model : we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature ! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his mistress : and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch ! I concocted

the main of it : relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

6th Stud. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly! speak within yourselves!

5th Stud. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm, -patted down over the left temple, like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

2nd Stud. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy! rich, that your face may the better set it off!

6th Stud. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gott. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1st Stud. Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6th Stud. She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gott. How he gazes on her! Pity pity!

1st Stud. They go in—now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II.—NOON

Over Orcana. The House of JULES, who crosses its threshold with PHENE—she is silent, on which JULES begins—

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now—
—you

Are mine now—let fate reach me how she likes,

If you'll not die—so, never die! Sit here—

My work-room's single seat: I over-lean

This length of hair and lustrous front they turn

Like an entire flower upward—eyes—lips—last

Your chin—no, last your throat turns—'tis their scent

Pulls down my face upon you! Nay, look ever

This one way till I change, grow you—I could

Change into you, beloved!

You by me,

And I by you—this is your hand in mine

And side by side we sit: all's true. Thank God!

I have spoken—speak, you!

—O, my life to come!

My Tydeus must be carved, that's there in clay;

Yet how be carved, with you about the chamber?

Where must I place you? When I think that once

This room—full of rough block-work—seemed my heaven

Without you! Shall I ever work again—

Get fairly into my old ways again—

Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,

My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?

Will my mere fancies live near you, my truth—

The live truth—passing and repassing me—

Sitting beside me?

Now speak!

Only, first,

See, all your letters! Was't not well contrived?

Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps

Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost?

Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam

Again those eyes complete
 Their melancholy survey, sweet and
 slow,
 Of all my room holds ; to return and
 rest
 On me, with pity, yet some wonder
 too
 As if God bade some spirit plague a
 world,
 And this were the one moment of
 surprise
 And sorrow while she took her station,
 pausing
 O'er what she sees, finds good, and
 must destroy !
 What gaze you at ? Those ? Books.
 I told you of ;
 Let your first word to me rejoice them,
 too :
 This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red
 Bistre and azure by Bessarion's
 scribe —
 Read this line . . . no, shame—Ho-
 mer's be the Greek
 First breathed me from the lips of my
 Greek girl !
 My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
 With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt
 page and page,
 To mark great places with due grati-
 tude ;
 " *He said, and on Antinous directed*
 " *A glitter shaft* " . . . a flower blots
 out the rest !
 Again upon your search ? My statues,
 then !
 Ah, do not mind that—better that
 will look
 When cast in bronze— an Almaign
 Kaiser, that,
 Swart-green and gold, with truncheon
 based on hip.
 This, rather, turn to ! What, un-
 recognised ?
 I thought you would have seen that
 here you sit
 As I imagined you, Hippolyta,
 Naked upon her bright Numidian
 horse !
 Recall you this, then ? " Carve in
 bold relief "—

So you commanded—"curve, against
I come,
"A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion
was,
"Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-
free,
"Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-
branch:
"Praise those who slew Hipparchus,
cry the guests,
"While o'er thy head the singer's
myrtle waves
"As erst above our champions':
stand up, all!"

See, I have laboured to express your
thought!

Quite round, a cluster of mere hands
and arms,
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from
all sides,
Only consenting at the branches' end
They strain toward) serves for frame to
a sole face—
The Praiser's—in the centre—who
with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light
inside
His brain where visionary forms throng
up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating
arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip
of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead,
nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample
on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts
approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn!
But you must say a "well" to that
say, "well!"

Because you gaze—am I fantastic,
sweet?
Gaze like my very life's—stuff, marble
--marbly
Even to the silence! why before I
found
The real flesh-Plena, I injured my-
self
To see, throughout all nature, varied
stuff

For better nature's birth by means of
all :

With me, each substance tended to
one form

Of beauty—to the human Archetype -
On every side occurred suggestive
germs

Of that - the tree, the flower—or take
the fruit.

Some rosy shape, continuing the
peach,

Curved beewise o'er its bough; as
rosy limbs,

Depending, nestled in the leaves—and
just

From a cleft rose-peach the whole
Dryad sprang!

But of the stuff's one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!

From the soft-rinded smoothening
facile chalk

That yields your outline to the air's
embrace,

Half-softened by a halo's pearly
gloom;

Down to the crisp imperious steel, so
sure

To cut its one confided thought clean
out

Of all the world: but marble! -
'neath my tools

More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug
from depths

In the Earth's heart, where itself
breeds itself,

And whence all baser substance may
be worked;

Refine it off to air, you may -con-
dense it

Down to the diamond;—is not metal
there,

When o'er the sudden specks my
chisel trips?

--Not flesh--as flake off flake I scale,
approach.

Lay bare those blueish veins of blood
asleep?

Lurks flame in no strange windings
where, surprised

By the swift implement sent home at
once,

Flushes and glowings radiate and
hover

About its track?

Phene? what--why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still-
dilating eyes!

Ah, you will die! I knew that you
would die!

*PHENE begins, on his having long
remained silent.*

Now the end's coming—to be sure, it
must

Have ended sometime! Tush-- why
need I speak

Their foolish speech? I cannot bring
to mind

One half of it, besides; and do not
care

For old Natalia now, nor any of
them.

Oh, you--what are you?—if I do not
try

To say the words Natalia made me
learn.

To please your friends,—it is to keep
myself

Where your voice lifted me, by let-
ting it

Proceed—but can it? Even you,
perhaps,

Cannot take up, now you have once
let fall,

The music's life, and me along with
that

No, or you would! We'll stay, then,
as we are

--Above the world.

You creature with the eyes!
If I could look for ever up to them,

As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,
All memory of wrong done or suffer-
ing borne.

Would drop down, low and lower, to
the earth

Whence all that's low comes, and
there touch and stay

--Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,

Drawn by those eyes! What rises is
myself,

Not so the shame and suffering; but
 they sink,
 Are left, I rise above them—Keep me
 Above the world!
 But you sink, for your eyes
 Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love
 you, love you" . . .
 I could prevent it if I understood
 More of your words to me—was't it
 the tone
 Or the words, your power?
 Or stay—I will repeat
 Your speech, if that contents you!
 Only, change
 No more, and I shall find it presently
 Far back here, in the brain yourself
 filled up.
 Natalia threatened me that harm
 would follow
 Unless I spoke their lesson to the end.
 But harm to me, I thought she meant,
 not you.
 Your friends,—Natalia said they were
 your friends
 And meant you well,—because, I
 doubted it,
 Observing (what was very strange to
 see)
 On every face, so different in all else,
 The same smile girls like us are used
 to bear,
 But never men, men cannot stoop so
 low;
 Yet your friends, speaking of you,
 used that smile,
 That hateful smirk of boundless self-
 conceit
 Which seems to take possession of
 this world
 And make of God their tame con-
 federate,
 Purveyor to their appetites . . . you
 know!
 But no—Natalia said they were your
 friends,
 And they assented while they smiled
 the more.
 And all came round me,—that thin
 Englishman
 With light, lank hair seemed leader
 of the rest;

He held a paper—"What we want,"
 said he,
 Ending some explanation to his
 friends.
 "Is something slow, involved and
 mystical."
 "To hold Jules long in doubt, yet
 take his taste
 "And lure him on, so that, at inner-
 most
 "Where he seeks 'sweetness' soul, he
 may find—this!
 "—As in the apple's core, the noisome
 fly;
 "For insects on the rind are seen at
 once,
 "And brushed aside as soon, but this
 is found
 "Only when on the lips or loathing
 tongue."
 And so he read what I have got by
 heart—
 I'll speak it,—“Do not die, love! I
 am yours” . . .
 Stop—is not that, or like that, part of
 words
 Yourself began by speaking? Strange
 to lose
 What cost much pains to learn! Is
 this more right?
*I am a painter who cannot paint;
 In my life, a devil rather than
 saint,
 In my brain, as poor a creature
 too—
 No end to all I cannot do!
 Yet do one thing at least I can—
 Love a man, or hate a man
 Supremely; thus my love began.
 Through the Valley of Love I went,
 In its loveliest spot to abide,
 And just on the verge where I pitched
 my tent,
 I found Hate dwelling by side,
 (Let the Bridegroom ask what the
 painter meant,
 Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)
 And further, I traversed Hate's
 grove,
 In its hatefullest nook to dwell;
 But lo, where I flung myself prone,
 couched Love*

*Where the deepest shadow fell,
(The meaning—those black bride's—
eyes above,
Not the painter's lip should tell!)*

"And here," said he, "Jules probably will ask.

"You have black eyes, love,—you are, sure enough,

"My peerless bride,—so do you tell, indeed,

"What needs some explanation—what means this?"

—And I am to go on, without a word
*So I grew wiser in Love and Hate,
From simple, that I was of late.
For once, when I loved, I would en-
brace*

*Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and
face*

*Of her I loved, in one embrace—
As if by mere love I could love im-
mensely!*

*And when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first
lunge*

*My foe's whole life out, like a
sponge*

*As if by mere hate I could hate in-
tensely!*

*But now I am wiser, know better
the fashion*

*How passion seeks aid from its op-
posite passion,*

*And if I see cause to love more, or
hate more*

*That ever man loved, ever hated, be-
fore*

*And seek in the Valley of Love,
The spot, or the spot in Hate's Grove,*

*Where my soul may the surest
reach*

*The essence, nought less, of each,
The Hate of all Hates, or the Love*

*Of all Loves, in its Valley or
Grove.*

*I find them the very warders
Each of the ether's borders.*

*I love most, when Love is disguised
In Hate; and when Hate is sur-
prise!*

In Love, then I hate most; ask

*How Love smiles through Hate's
iron casque,*

*Hate grins through Love's ro-
braided mask, —*

*And how, having hated thee,
I sought long and painfully*

*To wound thee, and not prick
The skin, but pierce to the quick,*

*Ask this, my Jules, and be answered
straight*

*By thy lord—how the painter Luc
why he can hate!*

JULES interposes.

Latwyche—who else? But all of them, no doubt,

Hated me: they at Venice—presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not
meet:

If I dreamed, saying this would wake
me!

Keep

What's here, this gold—we cannot
meet again,

Consider—and the money was but
meant

For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance, or hope, or care, or need
of it!

This—and what comes from selling
these, my casts

And books, and medals, except . . .
let them go

Together, so the produce keeps you safe,
Out of Natalia's clutches!—If by
chance

(For all's chance here) I should survive
the gang

At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the
world is wide

(From without is heard the voice
of PIPPA, singing—

Give her but a least excuse to love me!

When—when—

*How—can this arm establish her
above me,*

*If fortune fixed her as my lady
there,*

*There already, to eternally reprove
me!*

What the whole world except our love
—my own,

Own Phebe? But I told you, did I
not,

Ere night we travel for your land
—come I?

With the sea's silence on it? Still
—a job.

I do but break these paltry models up
To begin art afresh. Shall I meet
Lutwyche.

And save him from my statue's meet-
ing him?

Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going thro' his world there
stands

One mountain for a moment in the
dusk,

Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its
brow—

And you are ever by me while I gaze
—Are in my arms as now—as now—
as now!

Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far off seas!

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is pass-
ing from Oreana to the Turret.
Two or three of the Austrian
Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS,
an English vagabond, just in
view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.** So, that is your Pippa,
the little girl who passed us singing?
Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money
shall be honestly earned:—now, don't
make me that sour face because I bring
the Bishop's name into the business—
we know he can have nothing to do
with such horrors—we know that he
is a saint and all that a Bishop should
be, who is a great man besides. *Oh!*
were but we a worm a maggot, Every
Rye a pig, Every Lamb a Christmas
faggot, Every tune a jig! In fact, I
have abjured all religions; but the

* "He maketh his sun to rise on the
evil and on the good, and sendeth rain
on the just and on the unjust."

last I inclined to, was the Armenian
—for I have travelled, do you see, and
at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so
styled because there's a sort of bleak
hungry sun there), you might remark
over a venerable house-porch, a certain
Chaldee inscription; and brief as it
is, a mere glance at it used absolutely
to change the mood of every bearded
passenger. In they turned, one and
all; the young and lightsome, with
no irreverent pause, the aged and de-
crepit, with a sensible alacrity,—'twas
the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short.
Struck with curiosity, I lost no time
in learning Syriac—(these are vowels,
you dogs,—follow my stick's end in
the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*)
and one morning presented myself
spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I
picked it out letter by letter, and what
was the purport of this miraculous p—?
Some cherished legend of the past
you'll say—"How Moses hocus-pocust
Egypt's land with fly and locust,"—
or, "How to Jonah sounded harshish.
Get thee up and go to Tarshish,"—
or, "How the angel meeting Balaam,
Straight his ass returned a salaam:"—
in no wise! "Shackabrach—Boach—
somebody or other—Isaach, Re-er-er-er,
Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of—
Stolen goods!" So talk to me of the
religion of a bishop! I have renounced
all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—
mean to live so—and die—*As some*
Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hell-
ward bound in Charon's scowerry—With
food for both world's under and upper.
Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, and
never an obolus . . . (Though thanks
to you, or this Intendant thro' you, or
this Bishop through his Intendant—I
possess a burning pocket-full of *ev-n-*
gers). . . . *To pay the Stygian ferry!*

1st Pol. There is the girl, then; go
and deserve them the moment you
have pointed out to us Signor Luigi
and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have
been noticing a house yonder, this
long while—not a shutter unclosed
since morning!

2nd Pol. Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here : he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts : never molest such a household, they mean well.

Blup. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with?—one could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Penurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2nd Pol. Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out—the afternoon's over or nearly so.

3rd Pol. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

2nd Pol. Flourish all round—"put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom—"send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;" ink-spirt on right-hand side, which is the case here—"Arrest him at once," why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this : if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and it means well ; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his correspondence and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. *Blup.* makes the signal sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III.—EVENING

Inside the Turret. LUIGI and his Mother enter.

Mother. If there blew wind, you'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

Luigi. Here in the archway?

Mother. Oh no, no—in farther,
Where the echo is made—on the ridge.

Luigi. Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!

Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very
ghost of a voice,
Whose body is caught and kept by . . .
what are those?

Mere withered wall-flowers, waving
overhead?

They seem an elvish group with thin
bleached hair

Who lean out of their topmost fortress
—looking

And listening, mountain men, to what
we say,

Hands under chin of each grave earthy
face :

Up and show faces all of you!—"All
of you!"

That's the king's dwarf with the scarlet
comb : now hark—

Come down and meet your fate! Hark
—"Meet your fate!"

Mother. Let him not meet it, my
Luigi—do not

Go to his City! putting crime aside,

Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—

Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.

Luigi. Hush! say A. writes,
and B.

Mother. These A's and B's write
for effect, I say.

Then, evil is in its nature loud, while
good

Is silent—you hear each petty injury—

None of his daily virtues; he is old,

Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid

—why

Do A. and B. not kill him themselves?

Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A. tried
and failed
I could not teach that: mine's the
lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .
Mother. You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what
you are?
Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one
thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself: at times—nay, even
as now
We sit, I think my mind is touched
—suspect
All is not sound: but is not knowing
that,
What constitutes one sane or other-
wise?
I know I am thus—so all is right
again!
I laugh at myself as through the town
I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder—"I
am rich,
"Young, healthy; why should this
fact trouble me,
"More than it troubles these?" But
it does trouble me!
No—trouble's a bad word—for as I
walk
There's springing and melody and
giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of
my youth—
Dreams long forgotten, little in them-
selves—
Return to me—whatever may amuse
me,
And earth seems in a truce with me,
and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend
their strife,
The very cicadas laugh "There goes
he, and there!
"Feast him, the time is short—he is
on his way
"For the world's sake—feast him
this once, our friend!"

And in return for all this I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps: I go
This evening, mother!

Mother. But mistrust
yourself—

Mistrust the judgment you pronounce
on him.

Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure
that I am right!

Mother. Mistrust your judgment,
then, of the mere means
Of this wild enterprise: say you are
right,--

How should one in your state e'er
bring to pass

What would require a cool head, a
cold heart,

And a calm hand? You never will
escape.

Luigi. Escape—to even wish that,
would spoil all!

The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of
mine.

To leave myself excuse for longer life—
Was not life pressed down, running

o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my
fellows

Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer
stay?

I was put at the board-head, helped
to all

At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world

so much—

I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets,

and great stars
That had a right to come first and
see ebb

The crimson wave that drifts the sun
away—

Those crescent moons with notched
and burning rims

That strengthened into sharp fire,
and there stood,

Impatient of the azure—and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped

the storm--

May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit
summer nights—

PIPPA PASSES

273

Gone are they, but I have them in
my soul !
Mother. (He will not go !)
Luigi. You smile at
me ! 'Tis true.
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghas-
tliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar
wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and
oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now : you reach the
city—you must cross
His threshold—how ?
Luigi. Oh, that's if we
conspired !
Then would come pains in plenty, as
you guess—
But guess not how the qualities re-
quired
For such an office—qualities I have—
Would little stead me otherwise em-
ployed,
Yet prove of rarest merit here—here
only.
Every one knows for what his excel-
lence
Will serve, but no one ever will con-
sider
For what his worst defect might
serve ; and yet
Have you not seen me range our
coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash?—it
happens
The wry spoilt branch's a natural
perfect bow !
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precau-
tioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand !
No, no—I have a handsome dress
packed up—
White satin here, to set off my black
hair—
In I shall march—for you may watch
your life out
Behind thick walls—make friends
there to betray you ;
More than one man spoils everything.
March straight—
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for—

Take the great gate, and walk (not
saunter) on
Thro' guards and guards— I have
rehearsed it all
Inside the Turret here a hundred
times
Don't ask the way of whom you
meet, observe,
But where they cluster thickliest is
the door
Of doors ; they'll let you pass—they'll
never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the
favourite,
Whence he is bound and what's his
business now—
Walk in—straight up to him—you
have no knife—
Be prompt, how should he scream ?
Then, out with you !
Italy, Italy, my Italy !
You're free, you're free ! Oh mother,
I could dream
They got about me—Andrea from his
exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gaultier from
his grave !
Mother. Well, you shall go. Yet
seems this patriotism
The easie-t virtue for a selfish man
To acquire ! He loves himself—and
next, the world—
If he must love beyond,—but nought
between :
As a short-sighted man sees nought
midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er
with love—
I could not call you cruel or unkind !
Once more, your ground for killing
him !—then go !
Luigi. Now do you ask me, or
make sport of me ?
How first the Austrians got these
provinces—
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)
. . . Never by conquest but by cun-
ning, for
That treaty whereby . . .
Mother. Well ?

Luigi. (Sure he's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo — spring's his
confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes !)
Or . . . better go at once to modern
times —

He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I
understand
But can't re-state the matter ; that's
my boast ;
Others could reason it out to you,
and prove
Things they have made me feel.

Mother. Why
go to-night ?
Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning star. I cannot hear you,
Luigi !

Luigi. "I am the bright and morn-
ing-star," God saith —
And, "to such an one I give the
morning-star !"

The gift of the morning-star — have I
God's gift
Of the morning-star ?

Mother. Chiara will love
to see

That Jupiter an evening-star next June.

Luigi. True, mother. Well for
those who live through June !

Great noontides, thunder storms, all
glaring pomps

Which triumph at the heels of sove-
reign June

Leading his glorious revel thro' our
world.

Yes, Chiara will be here —

Mother. In June
—remember.

Yourself appointed that month for her
coming —

Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.

She must be grown — with her blue
eyes upturned

As if life were one long and sweet
surprise :

In June she comes.

Luigi. We were to see
together

The Titian at Treviso — there, again !

(From without is heard the voice
of PIPPA, singing—

*A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was higher heaven than
now :*

*And the king's locks cur. '
Disparting o'er a forchea. full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn
and horn*

*Of some sacrificial bull—
Only calm as a babe new-born :
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
From age with its bane, so sure
gone by,*

(*The Gods so loved him while he
dreamed.*)

*That, having lived thus long, there
seemed*

No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king
should ever die !

[From without.] *Among the rocks
his city was :*

*Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They hailed him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-
chief,*

*Swarthy and shameless—beggard-
cheat—*

*Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground ;
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lip and burning
cheek,*

*A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
Of one with sullen thickset brows :
And sometimes from the prison-
house*

*The angry priests a pale wretch
brought,*

*Who through some chink had pushed
and pressed,*

*On knees and elbows, belly and
breast,*

*Worm-like into the temple,—caught
At last there by the very God
Who ever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping
watch*

*Over his brazen door, such rogues
to catch!*

*And these, all and every one,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

*Luigi. That king should still judge
sitting in the sun!*

*[From without.] His councillors, on
left and right,
Looked anxious up,—but no sur-
prise*

*Disturbed the king's old smiling
eyes,*

*Where the very blue had turned to
white.*

*'Tis said, a Python scared one day
The breathless city, till he came,
With forked tongue and eyes on
flame,*

*Where the old king sate to judge
always;*

*But when he saw the sweepy hair,
Girt with a crown of berries rare
Which the God will hardly give to
wear*

*To the maiden who singeth, dancing
bare*

*In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch
lights,*

*At his wondrous forest rites,—
Beholding this, he did not dare,*

*Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.*

*Such grace had kings when the
world begun!*

(PIPPA PASSES.)

*Luigi. And such grace have they,
now that the world ends!
The Python in the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown
for slaying him,
Lurks in bye-corners lest they fall his
prey.
Are crowns yet to be won, in this late
trial,*

Which weakness makes me hesitate
to reach?

'Tis God's voice calls, how could I
stay? Farewell!

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is
passing from the Turret to the
Bishop's brother's House, close
to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor
Girls sitting on the steps.*

*1st Girl. There goes a swallow to
Venice—the stout sea-farer!
Seeing those birds fly, makes one
wish for wings.*

Let us all wish; you, wish first!

*2nd Girl. I? This sunset
To finish.*

*3rd Girl. That old . . . somebody
I know,*

*Greyer and older than my grand-
father,*

*To give me the same treat he gave
last week—*

*Feeding me on his knee with fig-
peckers,*

*Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine,
and munibling*

*The while some folly about how well
I fare,*

To be let eat my supper quietly—

*Since had he not himself been late
this morning*

*Detained at—nevermind where,—had
he not . . .*

"Eh, baggage, had I not!"—

*2nd Girl. How she
can lie!*

3rd Girl. Look there—by the nails—

*2nd Girl. What makes
your fingers red?*

*3rd Girl. Dipping them into wine
to write bad words with,*

On the bright table—how he laughed!

*1st Girl. My turn:
Spring's come and summer's coming:*

*I would wear
A long loose gown—down to the feet
and hands—*

*With plaits here, close about the
throat, all day:*

And all night lie, the cool long nights,
in bed—

And have new milk to drink—apples
to eat,

Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats
. . . ah, I should say,

This is away in the fields—miles!

3rd Girl. Say at once
You'd be at home—she'd always be
at home!

Now comes the story of the farm
among

The cherry orchards, and how April
snowed

White blossoms on her as she ran:
why, fool,

They've rubbed out the chalk-mark
of how tall you were,

Twisted your starling's neck, broken
his cage,

Made a dunghill of your garden—

1st Girl. They, destroy
My garden since I left them? well—
perhaps!

I would have done so—so I hope
they have!

A fig-tree curled out of our cottage
wall—

They called it mine, I have forgotten
why,

It must have been there long ere I
was born;

Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps
o'erhead

Pricking the papers strung to flutter
there

And keep off birds in fruit-time—
coarse long papers.

And the wasps eat them, prick them
through and through.

3rd Girl. How he mouth twitches!
Where was I?—be fore

She broke in with her wishes and long
gowns

And wasps—would I be such a fool!
—Oh, here!

This is my way—I answer every
one

Who asks me why I make so much of
him—

(If you say you love him—straight
“he'll not be gulled”)

“He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high—had eyes like yours, or
hair like yours,

Brown, red, white,”—as the case may
be—that pleases!

(See how that beetle burnishes in the
path—

There sparkles he along the dust!
and, there—

Your journey to that maize-tuft's spoil
at least!)

1st Girl. When I was young, they
said if you killed one

Of those sunshiny beetles, that his
friend

Up there, would shine no more that
day nor next.

2nd Girl. When you were young?
Nor are you young, that's true!

How your plump arms, that were,
have dropped away!

Why, I can span them! Cecco beats
you still?

No matter, so you keep your curious
hair.

I wish they'd find a way to dye our
hair

Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black—the men say they are sick

of black,
Black eyes, black hair!

4th Girl. Sick of yours, like
enough!

Do you pretend you ever tasted
lampreys

And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there's no trusting him)

to slice me
Polenta with a knife that has cut up

An ortolan.
2nd Girl. Why, there! is not that,

Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window,

--quick,
Where the lights are?

1st Girl. No—or she would sing;
—For the Intendant said . . .

3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first—
Then, if she listens and comes close

. . . I'll tell you,
Sing that song the young English

noble made.

Who took you for the purest of the
pure,
And meant to leave the world for you
what fun!

2nd Girl. [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet!—and I can carry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers
you carry
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfull now—some seed
At least is sure to strike
And yield what you'll not pluck
indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like!

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look? that pays a thousand
pains.

What's death?—You'll love me yet!

3rd Girl. [*To PIPPA who ap-
proaches.*] Oh, you may come closer
we shall not eat you! Why, you
can be the very person that the great
rich handsome Englishman has fallen
so violently in love with! I'll tell
you all about it.

IV.—NIGHT

*The Palace by the Duomo. MON-
SIGNOR, di missing his Attendants.*

Mon. Thanks, friends, many thanks.
I chiefly desire life now, that I may
recompense every one of you. Most
I know something of a ready. What,
a repast prepared? *Benedictio bene-
dictur . . . ugh . . . ugh!* Where
was I? Oh, as you were remarking,
Ego, the weather is mild, very unlike
winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian,
you know, and shiver in your Julys
here: To be sure, when 'twas full
summer at Messina, as we priests
used to cross in procession the great
square on Assumption Day, you might

see our thickest yellow tapers twist
suddenly in two, each like a falling
star, or sink down on themselves in a
gore of wax. But go, my friends, but
go! [*To the Intendant.*] Not you,
Ugo! [*The others leave the apart-
ment.*] I have long wanted to con-
verse with you, Ugo!

Inten. Uguccio—

Mon. . . . 'guccio Stefani, man!
of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno;
—what I do need instructing about,
are these accounts of your admini-
stration of my poor brother's affairs.
Ugh! I shall never get through a
third part of your accounts: take
some of these dainties before we
attempt it, however: are you bashful
to that degree? For me, a crust and
water suffice.

Inten. Do you choose this especial
night to question me?

Mon. This night, Ugo. You have
managed my late brother's affairs since
the death of our elder brother—
fourteen years and a month, all but
three days. On the 3rd of December,
I find him . . .

Inten. If you have so intimate an
acquaintance with your brother's
affairs, you will be tender of turning
so far back—they will hardly bear
looking into, so far back.

Mon. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing
but disappointments here below! I
remark a considerable payment made
to yourself on this 3rd of December.
Talk of disappointments! There was
a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign
sculptor, I did my utmost to advance,
that the church might be a gainer by
us both: he was going on hopefully
enough, and of a sudden he notifies
to me some marvellous change that
has happened in his notions of art:
here's his letter,—“He never had a
clearly conceived Ideal within his
brain till to-day. Yet since his hand
could manage a chisel, he has prac-
tised expressing other men's Ideals—
and, in the very perfection he has
attained to, he foresees an ultimate

future his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit: there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics.”—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Inten. Is Correggio a painter?

Mon. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet, now, or a musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Inten. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours: first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls: and now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me?

Mon. Ugo . . .

Inten. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

Mon. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here: if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

Inten. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Mon. I had better not.—I should rip up old disgraces—let out my poor

brother's weaknesses. By the way, Matteo of Forlì (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

Inten. No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

Mon. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *dere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp! Matteo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under Heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest: my dear two dead brothers were, what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source: or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stay the consequences of his crime; and not one *solto* shall escape me. Matteo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderes* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other mur-

deceits and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Inten. What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

Mon. Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in! How should I dare to say . . .

Inten. "Forgive us our trespasses"

Mon. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps: shall I proceed, at it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuous efforts will keep my thers out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Inten. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Mon. 1, 2—No. 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by me, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in scaling up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeed-

ing heir, and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

Inten. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Mon. Liar!

Inten. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly thrice a year). If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Mon. I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Inten. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death—let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I and the Police employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—

assent I do not say— but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and for ever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

*(From without is heard the voice of
PIPPA, singing—*

*Over-head the tree-tops meet—
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's
feet—
There was nought above me, and
nought below,
My childhood had not learned to know!
For, what are the voices of birds
—Ay, and of beasts,—but words—
our words,
Only so much more sweet?
The knowledge of that with my life
began!
But I had so near made out the
sun,
And counted your stars, the Seven and
One,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white
moon ranges;
And just when out of her soft fifty
changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook
me—
Suddenly God took me!*

(PIPPA passes.)

Mon. [Springing up.] My people—one and all—all—within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and foot! He dares—I know not half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* quick, I say!

PIPPA'S Chamber again. She enters it.

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in its tomb,
Wile winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and
lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel,
my Zanze—
“Feast upon lampreys, quaff the
Breganze”
The summer of life's so easy to
spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put
away!
But winter hastens at summer's
end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm,
pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to . . . what did
she say?
“Pare your nails pearlwise, get your
small feet shoes
“More like . . . (what said she?
and less like canoes—”
How pert that girl was!—would I be
those pert
Impudent staring women! it had done
me,
However, surely no such mighty
hurt
To learn his name who passed that
jest upon me:
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to
inspect
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes
and thick rings
Of English-coloured hair, at all events.
Well—if old Luca keeps his good
intent,
We shall do better: see what next
year brings!
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not
appear
More destitute than you, perhaps,
next year!
Bluph . . . something! I had caught
the uncouth name

But for Monsignor's people's sudden
clatter

Above us—bound to spoil such idle
chatter

As ours; it were, indeed, a serious
matter

If silly talk like ours should put to
shame

The pious man, the man devoid of
blame,

The . . . ah, but—ah, but, all the
same,

No mere mortal has a right

To carry that exalted air;

Best people are not angels quite

While—not the worst of people's
doings scare

The devils; so there's that proud look
to spare!

Which is mere counsel to myself,
mind! for

I have just been the holy Monsig-
nor!

And I was you too, Luigi's gentle
mother,

And you too, Luigi!—how that Luigi
started

Out of the Turret—doubtlessly de-
parted

On some good errand or another,

For he past just now in a traveller's
trim,

And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled

As if they had lost a prey in him.

And I was Jules the sculptor's
bride,

And I was Ottima beside,

And now what am I?—tired of fool-
ing!

Day for folly, night for schooling!

New year's day is over and spent,

Ill or well, I must be content!

Even my lily's asleep, I vow:

Wake up—here's a friend I've pluckt
you!

See—call this flower a heart's-ease
now!

And something rare, let me instruct
you,

Is this—with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen.

While the leaves and parts that with
ness

The old proportions and their fitness
Here remain, unchanged unmoved

now

So call this pampered thing improved
now!

Suppose there's a king of the flowers,
And a girl-show held in his bower:

"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"

Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,

I have made her gorge potentia

Till both cheeks are near as bouncing

As her . . . name there's no pro-
nouncing!

See this heightened colour too,

For she swilled Breganze wine

Till her nose turned deep camomile

'Twas but white when wild she grew!

And only by this Zanze's eye

Of which we could not change the
size,

The magnitude of what's achieved

Otherwise, may be perceived!"

Oh what a drear, dark close to my
poor day!

How could that red sun drop at
black cloud!

Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is mazed
away,

Dispensed with, never more to be
allowed,

Day's turn is over—now arrives the
night's

Oh, Lark, be day's apostle

To mavis, merle and thros le,

Bid them their betters join the

From day and its delig^ht is!

But at night, brother Towlet, far over
the woods,

Toll the world to thy chantry

Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods

Full complines with gallantry

Then, owls and bats, crows and twats,

Monks and nuns, in a cloister's
moods,

Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

*[After she has begun to undress
herself]*

Now, one thing I should like really
to know:

How near I ever might approach all
these

I only fancied being, this long day--

Approach, I mean, so as to touch
them--

As to . . . in some way . . . move
them--if you please,

Do good or evil to them some slight
way.

For instance, if I wind

Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

[Sitting on the bedside.]

And border Otim's cloak's hem--

Ah, me and my important part with
them,

This morning's hymn half promised
when I rose!

True in some sense or other, I suppose,
Though I passed by them all, and
felt no sign.

[As she lies down.]

God bless me! I can pray no more
to-night.

No doubt, some way or other, hymn,
say right.

All service is the same with God

*With God, whose puppets, best and
worst,*

Are we: there is no last nor first.

[She sleeps.]

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

A TRAGEDY

So far as I know, this Tragedy is the first artistical consequence of what Voltaire termed "a terrible event without consequences;" and although it professes to be historical, I have taken more pains to arrive at the history than most readers would thank me for particularising: since acquainted, as I will hope them to be, with the chief circumstances of Victor's remarkable European career--nor quite ignorant of the sad and surprising facts I am about to reproduce (tolerable accounts of which are to be found, for instance, in Abbé Roman's *Récit*, or even the fifth of Lord Orrery's Letters from Italy)--I cannot expect them to be versed, nor desirous of becoming so, in all the details of the memoirs, correspondence, and relations of the time. From these only may be obtained a knowledge of the fiery and audacious temper, unscrupulous selfishness, profound dissimulation and singular fertility in resources, of Victor--the extreme and painful sensibility, prolonged immaturity of powers, earnest good purpose and vacillating will, of Charles--the noble and right woman's-manliness of his wife--and the ill-considered rascality and subsequent better-advised rectitude of D'Ormea. When I say, therefore, that I cannot but believe my statement (combining as it does what appears correct in Voltaire and plausible in Condorcet) more true to person and thing than any it has hitherto been my fortune to meet with, no doubt my word will be taken, and my evidence spared as readily.

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

PERSONS

VICTOR AMADEUS, First King of Sardinia
CHARLES EMMANUEL, his Son, Prince of Piedmont.
POLYXENA, Wife of Charles.
D'ORMEA, Minister.

SCENE.—The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin, communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left and another to the right of the stage.

TIME, 1730-1.

FIRST YEAR 1730.—KING
VICTOR

PART I.

CHARLES, POLYXENA.

Cha. You think so? Well, I do not.
Pol. My beloved,
All must clear up—we shall be happy
yet:

This cannot last for ever . . . oh,
may change

To-day, or any day!

Cha. —May change? Ah yes—
May change!

Pol. Endure it, then.
Cha. No doubt, a life

Like this drags on, now better and
now worse;

My father may . . . may take to
loving me;

And he may take, too, D'Ormea closer
yet

To counsel him;—may even cast off
her

--That bad Sebastian; but he also
may

. . . Or, no, Polyxena, my only friend,
He may not force you from me?

Pol. Now, force me

From you!—me, close by you as if
there gloomed

No D'Ormeas, no Sebastians on our
path—

At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . .
force me!

Cha. Because I felt as sure, as I
feel sure

We clasp hands now, of being happy
once.

Young was I, quite neglected, nor
concerned

By the world's business that engrossed
so much

My father and my brother: if I peered
From out my privacy,—amid the
crash

And blaze of nations, domineered those
two;

'Twas war, peace—France our foe,
now—England, friend—

In love with Spain—at feud with
Austria!—Well—

I wondered—laughed a moment's
laugh for pride

In the chivalrous couple—then let
drop

My curtain—"I am out of it." I said—
When . . .

Pol. You have told me, Charles,

Cha.
 When suddenly,—a warm March day,
 just that !
 Just so much sunshine as the cottager's
 child
 Basks in delighted, while the cottager
 Takes off his bonnet, as he ceases work,
 To catch the more of it—and it must
 fall
 Heavily on my brother . . . had you
 seen
 Philip—the lion-featured !—not like
 me !
Pol. I know —
Cha. And Philip's mouth yet
 fast to mine,
 His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm
 still round
 My neck, —they bade me rise, " for I
 was heir
 To the Duke," they said, " the right
 hand of the Duke ;"
 Till then he was my father, not the
 Duke !
 So . . . let me finish . . . the whole
 intricate
 World's-business their dead boy was
 born to, I
 Must conquer,—ay, the brilliant thing
 he was,
 I, of a sudden, must be : my faults,
 my follies.
 —All bitter truths were told me, all
 at once
 To end the sooner. What I simply
 styled
 Their overlooking me, had been con-
 tempt :
 How should the Duke employ himself
 forsooth,
 With such an one while lordly Philip
 rode
 By him their Turin through ? But he
 was punished .
 And must put up with me ! 'Twas
 sad enough
 To learn my future portion and sub-
 mit—
 And then the wear and worry, blame
 on blame !
 —For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-
 smells about,

How could I but grow dizzy in their
 pent
 Dim palace-rooms at first ? My
 mother's look
 As they discussed my insignificance
 (She and my father, and I sitting by,)
 I bore : I knew how brave a son
 they missed :
 Philip had gaily passed state-papers
 o'er,
 While Charles was spelling at them
 painfully !
 But Victor was my father spite of
 that.
 " Duke Victor's entire life has been,"
 I said,
 " Innumerable efforts to one end ;
 " And, on the point now of that end's
 success,
 " Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,
 " Where's time to be reminded 'tis his
 child
 " He spurns ?" And so I suffered . . .
 yet scarce suffered,
 Since I had you at length !
Pol. — To serve in place
 Of monarch, minister and mistress.
 Charles.
Cha. But, once that crown obtained,
 then wasn't not like
 Our lot would alter ?—" When he rests,
 takes breath.
 " Glances around, and sees who's left
 to love
 " Now that my mother's dead, sees I
 am left .
 " Is it not like he'll love me at the
 last ?"
 Well : Savoy turns Sardinia—the
 Duke's King !
 Could I—precisely then—could you
 expect
 His harshness to redouble ? These
 few months
 I have been . . . have been . . . Poly-
 xena, do you
 And God conduct me, or I lose my-
 self !
 What would he have ? What is't they
 want with me ?
 Him with this mistress and this
 minister,

—You see me and you hear him; judge us both!

Pronounce what I should do, Polyxena!

Pol. Endure, endure, beloved! Say you not

That he's your Father? All's so incident

To novel sway! Beside, our life must change:

Or you'll acquire his kingcraft, or he'll find

Harshness a sorry way of teaching it. I bear this—not that there's so much to bear—

Cha. Your bear it? don't I know that you, tho' bound To silence for my sake, are perishing Piecemeal beside me? and how otherwise?

—When every creephole from the hideous Court

Is shut; the Minister to dog me, here—

The Mistress posted to entrap you, there!

And thus shall we grow old in such a life—

Not careless,—never estranged,—but old: to alter

Our life, there is so much to alter!

Pol. Come— Is it agreed that we forego complaints Even at Turin, yet complain we here At Rivoli? 'Twere wiser you announced

Our presence to the King. What's now a-foot,

I wonder?—Not that any more's to dread

Than every day's embarrassment—but guess,

For me, why train so fast succeeded train

On the high-road, each gayer still than each;

I noticed your Archbishop's pursuit, the sable cloak and silver cross;

such pomp

hides . . . what now, Charles? Can you conceive?

Cha.

Not I.

Pol. A matter of some moment

Cha. There's our life!

Which of the group of loiterers that stared

From the lime-avenue, divines that I

About to figure presently, he thinks,

In face of all assembled—am the one

Who knows precisely least about it?

Pol. . . . ush!

D'Ormea's contrivance!

Cha. Ay—how

otherwise

Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil?

So that the simplest courtier may remark,

'Twere idle raising parties for a Prince Content to linger D'Ormea's laughing-stock!

Something, 'tis like, about that weary business

[*Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which POLYXENA examines.*]

—Not that I comprehend three words, of course.

After all last night's study.

Pol. The faint heart!

Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now

Its substance . . . (that's the folded speech I mean,

Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs . . .)

—What would you have?—I fancied while you spoke,

Some tones were just your father's.

Cha. Flattery!

Pol. I fancied so:—and here lurks, sure enough.

My note upon the Spanish Claims! You've mastered

The sief-speech thoroughly—this other, mind,

Is an opinion you deliver,—stay,

Best read it slowly over once to me;

Read—there's bare time; you read it firmly—loud

—Rather loud—looking in his face, —don't sink

Your eye once—ay, thus ! “ If Spain
claims . . . ” begin
Just as you look at me !

Cha.

Oh, truly,

You have I seen, say, marshalling
your troops

Dismissing councils — or, through
doors ajar,

Head sunk on hand, devoured by
slow chagrins

—Then radiant, for a crown had all
at once

Seemed possible again ! I can behold
Him, whose least whisper ties my
spirit fast,

In this sweet brow, nought could
divert me from,

Save objects like Sebastian’s shame-
less lip,

Or, worse, the clipt grey hair and
dead white face,

And dwindling eye as if it ached
with guile,

Which D’Ormea wears . . .

*[As he kisses her, enter from the
KING’S apartment D’ORMEA.]*

. . . I said he would divert

My kisses from your brow !

D’O. [Aside.] Here ! So King
Victor

Spoke truth for once ; and who’s
ordained, but I,

To make that memorable ? Both in
call,

As he declared ! Were’t better gnash
the teeth,

Or laugh outright now ?

Cha. [to Pol.]

What’s his

visit for ?

D’O. [Aside.] I question if they’ll
even speak to me.

Pol. [to Cha.] Face D’Ormea, he’ll
suppose you fear him, else.

[Aloud.] The Marquis bears the King’s
command, no doubt.

D’O. [Aside.] Precisely !—If I
threatened him, perhaps ?

Well, this at least is punishment
enough !

Men used to promise punishment
would come.

Cha. Deliver the King’s message,
Marquis !

D’O. [Aside.]

Ah—

So anxious for his fate ? *[Aloud.]* A
word, my Prince,

Before you see your father—just one
word

Of counsel !

Cha.

Oh, your counsel cer-
tainly

Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us !

Well, sir ? Be brief, however !

D’O.

What ?

you know

As much as I ?—preceded me, most
like,

In knowledge ? So ! (’Tis in his eye,
beside

His voice—he knows it and his heart’s
on flame

Already ! You surmise why you,
myself,

Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,
Are summoned thus ?

Cha.

Is the Prince

used to know,

At any time, the pleasure of the King,
Before his minister ?—Polyxena,

Stay here till I conclude my task—I
feel

Your presence—(smile not)—thro’ the
walls, and take

Fresh heart. The King’s within that
chamber ?

*D’O. [Passing the table whereon
a paper lies, exclaims, as he
glances at it.]* “ Spain ! ”

Pol. [Aside to Cha.] Tarry awhile :
what ails the minister ?

D’O. Madam, I do not often trouble
you.

The Prince loathes, and you loathe
me—let that pass ;

But since it touches him and you,
not me,

Bid the Prince listen !

Pol. [to Cha.]

Surely you will
listen !

—Deceit ?—Those fingers crumpling
up his vest ?

Cha. Deceitful to the very fingers’
ends !

D'O. [Who has approached them, overlooks the other paper CHARLES continues to hold.]

My project for the Fiefs! As I supposed!

Sir, I must give you light upon those measures

For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,

Mine too!

Cha. Release me! Do you gloze on me

Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world

You've made for me at Turin) your contempt?

Your measures?—When was any hateful task

Not D'Ormea's imposition? Leave my robe!

What post can I bestow, what grant concede?

Or do you take me for the King?

D'O. Not I!

Not yet for King,—not for, as yet, thank God,

One, who in . . . shall I say a year a month?

Ay!—shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave

In his Sardinia,—Europe's spectacle, And the world's bye-word! What?

The Prince aggrieved

That I've excluded him our counsels? Here

[Touching the paper in CHARLES'S hand.]

Accept a method of extorting gold From Savoy's nobles, who must wring its worth

In silver first from tillers of the soil, Whose hinds again have to contribute brass

To make up the amount—there's counsel, sir!

My counsel, one year old; and the fruit, this—

Savoy's become a mass of misery And wrath, which one man has to

meet—the King:

You're not the King! Another counsel, sir!

Spain entertains a project (here it lies)

Which, guessed, makes Austria offer that same King

Thus much to battle Spain; he promises;

Then comes Spain, breathless lest she be forestalled,

Her offer follows; and he promises . . .

Cha.—Promises, sir, when he before agreed

To Austria's offer?

D'O. That's a counsel, Prince!

But past our foresight, Spain and Austria (choosing

To make their quarrel up between themselves

Without the intervention of a friend)

Produce both treaties, and both promises . . .

Cha. How?

D'O. Prince, a counsel!—And the fruit of that?

Both parties covenant afresh, to fall

Together on their friend, blot out his name,

Abolish him from Europe. So take note,

Here's Austria and here's Spain to fight against,

And what sustains the King but Savoy here,

A miserable people mad with wrongs? You're not the King!

Cha. Polyxena, you said

All would clear up—all does clear up to me!

D'O. Clears up? 'Tis no such thing to envy, then?

You see the King's state in its length and breadth?

You blame me, now, for keeping you aloof

From counsels and the fruit of counsels?—Wait

Till I've explained this morning's business!

Cha. [Aside.] No—Stoop to my father, yes,—to D'Ormea, no;

—The King's son, not to the King's
counsellor!

I will do something,—but at least
retain

The credit of my deed! [*Aloud.*]

Then, D'Ormea, this

You now expressly come to tell
me?

D'O.

This

To tell! You apprehend me?

Cha.

Perfectly.

And further, D'Ormea, you have shown
yourself,

For the first time these many weeks
and months,

Disposed to do my bidding?

D'O.

From the heart!

Cha. Acquaint my father, first, I
wait his pleasure:

Next . . . or, I'll tell you at a fitter
time.

Acquaint the King!

D'O. [*Aside.*] If I 'scape Victor
yet!

First, to prevent this stroke at me—if
not,—

Then, to avenge it! [*To Cha.*]

Gracious sir, I go.

[*Goes.*]

Cha. God, I forbore! Which more
offends—that man

Or that man's master? Is it come to
this?

Have they supposed (the sharpest
insult yet)

I needed e'en his intervention?

No!

No—dull am I, conceded,—but so
dull,

Scarcely! Their step decides me.

Pol.

How decides?

Cha. You would be free from
D'Ormea's eye and hers?

—Could fly the court with me and live
content?

So—this it is for which the knights
assemble!

The whispers and the closeting of
late,

The savageness and insolence of
old,

—For this!

Pol.

What mean you?

Cha.

How? you fail to catch
Their clever plot? I missed it—but
could you?

These last two months of care to in-
culcate

How dull I am,—with D'Ormea's
present visit

To prove that, being dull, I might be
worse

Were I a king—as wretched as now
dull—

You recognise in it no winding up
Of a long plot?

Pol.

Why should there be
a plot?

Cha. The crown's secure now; I
should shame the crown

An old complaint; the point is, how
to gain

My place for one more fit in Victor's
eyes,

His mistress', the Sebastian's child.

Pol.

In truth?

Cha. They dare not quite dethrone
Sardinia's Prince:

But they may descant on my dulness
till

They sting me into even praying
them

For leave to hide my head, resign my
state,

And end the coil. Not see now? In
a word,

They'd have me tender them myself
my rights

As one incapable: some cause for
that,

Since I delayed thus long to see their
drift!

I shall apprise the King he may re-
sume

My rights this moment.

Pol.

Pause—I dare not think

So ill of Victor.

Cha.

Think no ill of him!

Pol.

—Nor think him, then, so
shallow as to suffer

His purpose be divined thus easily.

And yet—you are the last of a great
line;

There's a great heritage at stake; new
days

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

291

Seemed to await this newest of the
realms

Of Europe:—Charles, you must with-
stand this!

Cha.

Ah!

You dare not then renounce the
splendid court

For one whom all the world despises?
Speak!

Pol. My gentle husband, speak I
will, and truth.

Were this as you believe, and I once
sure

Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,
I could . . . could? Oh, what happi-
ness it were—

To live, my Charles, and die alone
with you!

Cha. I grieve I asked you. To the
Presence, then!

D'Ormea acquaints the King by this,
no doubt,

He fears I am too simple for mere
hints,

And that no less will serve than
Victor's mouth

Teaching me in full council what I
am.

—I have not breathed, I think, these
many years!

Pol. Why—it may be!—if he de-
sires to wed

That woman and legitimate her
child—

Ch. You see as much? Oh, let
his will have way!

You'll not repent confiding in me,
love?

There's many a brighter spot in Pied-
mont, far,

Than Rivoli. I'll seek him—or,
suppose

You hear first how I mean to speak
my mind?

Loudly and firmly both, this time,
be sure!

I yet may see your Rhine-land—who
can tell?

Once away, ever then away! I
breathe.

Pol. And I too breathe!

Cha. Come, my Poiyxena!

KING VICTOR

PART II.

*Enter KING VICTOR, bearing the
regalia on a cushion from his
apartment. He calls loudly.*

D'Ormea!—for patience fails me,
treading thus

Among the trains that I have laid,—
my knights,

Safe in the hall here—in that ante-
room,

My son,—and D'Ormea, where? Of
this, one touch—

[Laying down the crown.]

This fireball to these mute, black, cold
trains—then!

Outbreak enough!

[Contemplating it.] To lose all, after
all!

This—glancing o'er my house for ages
—shaped,

Brave meteor, like the Crown of
Cyprus now—

Jerusalem, Spain, England—every
change

The braver,—and when I have
clutched a prize

My ancestry died wan with watching
for,

To lose it!—by a slip—a fault—a trick
Learnt to advantage once, and not un-
learnt

When past the use,—“just this once
more” (I thought)

“Use it with Spain and Austria
happily,

And then away with trick!”—An
oversight

I'd have repaired thrice over, any time
These fifty years, must happen now!

There's peace
At length: and I, to make the most
of peace,

Ventured my project on our people
here,

As needing not their help—which
Europe knows,

And means, cold-blooded, to dispose
herself

(Apart from plausibilities of war)
 To crush the new-made King—who
 ne'er till now
 Feared her. As Duke, I lost each
 foot of earth
 And laughed at her: my name was
 left, my sword
 Left, all was left! But she can take,
 she knows,
 This crown, herself conceded . . .
 That's to try,
 Kind Europe! My career's not closed
 as yet!
 This boy was ever subject to my
 will—
 Timid and tame—the fitter! D'Ormea,
 too—
 What if the sovereign's also rid of
 thee
 His prime of parasites?—Yet I delay!
 D'Ormea! [*As D'ORMEA enters, the
 King seats himself.*]
 My son, the Prince—attends he?
 D'O. Sire,
 He does attend. The crown prepared!
 —it seems
 That you persist in your resolve.
 I'll. Who's come?
 The chancellor and the chamberlain?
 My knights
 D'O. The whole Annunziata.—If,
 my liege,
 Your fortunes had not tottered worse
 than now . . .
 I'll. Del Borgo has drawn up the
 schedules? mine—
 My son's too? Excellent! Only,
 beware
 Of the least blunder, or we look but
 fools.
 First, you read the Annulment of the
 Oaths;
 Del Borgo follows . . . no, the Prince
 shall sign;
 Then let Del Borgo read the Instru-
 ment—
 On which, I enter.—
 D'O. Sire, this may be truth;
 You, sire, may do as you affect—may
 break
 Your engine, me, to pieces: try at
 least

If not a spring remains worth saving!
 Take
 My counsel as I've counselled many
 times!
 What if the Spaniard and the Austrian
 threat?
 There's England, Holland, Venice—
 which ally
 Select you?
 I'll. Aha! Come, my D'Ormea,
 "truth"
 Was on your lip a minute since. Allies?
 I've broken faith with Venice, Holland,
 England.
 As who knows if not you?
 D'O. But why with me
 Break faith—with one ally, your best,
 break faith?
 I'll. When first I stumbled on you,
 Marquis—('twas
 At Mondovi—a little lawyer's
 clerk . . .)
 D'O. . . . Therefore your soul's
 ally!—who brought you through
 Your quarrel with the Pope, at pains
 enough—
 Who've simply echoed you in these
 affairs—
 On whom you cannot, therefore, visit
 these
 Affairs' ill fortune—whom you'll trust
 to guide
 You safe (yes, on my soul) in these
 affairs!
 I'll. I was about to notice, had you
 not
 Prevented me, that since that great
 town kept
 With its chicanery my D'Ormea's satchel
 stuffed,
 And D'Ormea's self sufficiently re-
 cluse,
 He missed a sight,—my naval arma-
 ment
 When I burnt Toulon. How the skill
 exults
 Upon the galliot's wave!—rises its
 height,
 O'ertops it ever; but the great wave
 bursts—
 And hell-deep in the horrible pro-
 found

Buries itself the galliot :—shall the
skiff
Think to escape the sea's black trough
in turn?
Apply this : you have been my
minister
—Next me—above me, possibly :—
sad post,
Huge care, abundant lack of peace of
mind;
Who would desiderate the emi-
nence?
You gave your soul to get it—you'd
yet give
Your soul to keep it, as I mean you
shall,
My D'Ormea! What if the wave
ebbed with me?
Whereas it cants you to another's
crest—
I toss you to my son; ride out your
ride!
D'O. Ah, you so much despise me
then?
Vic. You, D'Ormea?
Nowise; and I'll inform you why. A
king
Must in his time have many mini-
sters,
And I've been rash enough to part
with mine
When I thought proper. Of the tribe,
not one
... Or wait, did Pianezze? ... ah,
just the same!)
Not one of them, ere his remonstrance
reached
The length of yours, but has assured
me (commonly,
standing much as you stand, — or
nearer, say,
The door to make his exit on his
speech)
—I should repent of what I did : now,
D'Ormea,
Be candid—you approached it when
I bade you
Prepare the schedules! But you
stopped in time!
—You have not so assured me : how
should I
Despise you, then?

Enter CHARLES.

Vic. [*Changing his tone.*] Are you
instructed? Do
My order, point by point! About it,
sir!
D'O. You so despise me? [*Aside.*]
One last stay remains—
The boy's discretion there.
[To CHARLES.
For your sake, Prince,
I pleaded—wholly in your interest—
To save you from this fate!
Cha. [*Aside.*] Must I be told
The Prince was supplicated for—by
him?
Vic. [*To D'O.*] Apprise Del Borgo,
Spava, and the rest,
Our son attends them; then return.
D'O. One word.
Cha. [*Aside.*] A moment's pause
and they would drive me hence,
I do believe!
D'O. [*Aside.*] Let but the boy be
firm!
Vic. You disobey?
Cha. [*To D'O.*] You do not dis-
obey
Me, D'Ormea? Did you promise that
or no?
D'O. Sir, I am yours—what would
you? Yours am I!
Cha. When I have said what I shall
say, 'tis like
Your face will ne'er again disgust me.
Go!
Through you, as through a breast of
glass, I see.
And for your conduct, from my youth
till now,
Take my contempt! You might have
spared me much,
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed
yourself—
That's over now—Go—ne'er to come
again!
D'O. As son, the father—father as,
the son!
My wits! My wits! [*Goes.*
Vic. [*Seated.*] And you, what meant
you, pray,
By speaking thus to D'Ormea?

Cha. Let us not
Weary ourselves with D'Ormea!
Those few words
Have half unsettled what I came to
say.

His presence vexes to my very soul.
Vic. One called to manage king-
doms, Charles, needs heart
To bear up under worse annoyances
Than D'Ormea seems -- to me, at
least.

Cha. [*Aside.*] Ah, good!
He keeps me to the point! Then be
it so.

[*Aloud.*] Last night, Sire, brought me
certain papers—these
To be reported on,—your way of
late.

Is it last night's result that you de-
mand?

Vic. For God's sake, what has night
brought forth? Pronounce

The . . . what's your word?—result!

Cha. Sire, that had proved
Quite worthy of your sneers, no
doubt:—a few

Lame thoughts, regard for you alone
could wring,

Lame as they are, from brains, like
mine, believe!

As 'tis, sire, I am spared both toil and
sneer.

There are the papers.

Vic. Well, sir? I suppose
You hardly burned them. Now for
your result!

Cha. I never should have done
great things of course,
But . . . oh, my father, had you loved
me more . . .

Vic. Loved you? [*Aside.*] Has
D'Ormea played me false, I
wonder?

[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love
is diffused—yourself
May overlook, perchance, your part
in it.

Our monarchy is absolutest now
In Europe, or my trouble's thrown
away:

I love, my mode, that subjects each
and all

May have the power of loving, all and
each,

Their mode: I doubt not, many have
their sons
To trifle with, talk soft to, all day
long.

I have that crown, this chair, and
D'Ormea, Charles!

Cha. 'Tis well I am a subject then,
not you.

Vic. [*Aside.*] D'Ormea has told
him everything.

[*Aloud.*] Aha!

I apprehend you: when all's said,
you take

Your private station to be prized
beyond

My own, for instance?

Cha. —Do and ever did
So take it: 'tis the method you pursue
That grieves . . .

Vic. These words! Let me
express, my friend,

Your thought. You penetrate what I
supposed

A secret. D'Ormea plies his trade
betimes!

I purpose to resign my crown to you.

Cha. To me?

Vic. Now—in that chamber.

Cha. You resign

The crown to me?

Vic. And time enough,
Charles, sure?

Confess with me, at four-and-sixty
years

A crown's a load. I covet quiet once
Before I die, and summoned you for
that.

Cha. 'Tis I will speak: you ever
hated me,

I bore it,—have insulted me, borne
too

Now you insult yourself, and I re-
member

What I believed you, what you really
are,

And cannot bear it. What! My life
has passed!

Under your eye, tormented as you
know,—

Your whole sagacities, one after one,

At leisure brought to play on me—to
prove me

A fool, I thought, and I submitted;
now

You'd prove . . . what would you
prove me?

Vic. This to me?

I hardly know you!

Cha. Know me? Oh, indeed!
You do not! Wait till I complain
next time

Of my simplicity!—for here's a sage—
Knows the world well—is not to be
deceived—

And his experience, and his March
travels,

His D'Ormeas, teach him—what?—
that I, this while,

Have envied him his crown! He has
not smiled,

I warrant,—has not eaten, drunk, nor
slept,

For I was plotting with my Princess
yonder!

Who knows what we might do, or
might not do?

Go, now—be politic—astound the
world!—

That sentry in the antechamber . . .
nay,

The varlet who disposed this precious
trap [*Pointing to the crown.*]

That was to take me—ask them if
they think

Their own sons envy them their posts!
—Know me!

Vic. But you know me, it seems;
so learn in brief

My pleasure. This assembly is con-
vened . . .

Cha. Tell me, that woman put it
in your head—

You were not sole contriver of the
scheme,

My father!

Vic. Now observe me, sir! I jest
Seldom—on these points, never.

Here, I say,
the Knights assemble to see me con-
cede,

And you accept, Sardinia's crown.

Cha. Farewell!

'Twere vain to hope to change this
I can end it.

Not that I cease from being your
when sunk

Into obscurity. I'll die for you,
But not annoy you with my presence

—Sire,

Farewell! Farewell!

Enter D'ORMEA.

D'O. [*Aside.*] Ha,—he be's changed
again

Means not to fall into the cunning
trap—

Then, Victor, I shall yet escape you,
Victor!

Vic. [*Suddenly placing the crown
upon the head of CHARLES.*]

D'Ormea, your King!

[*To CHARLES.*] My son, obey
me! Charles,

Your father, clearer-sighted than your-
self,

Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this
looks real!

My reasons after—reason upon reason
After—but now, obey me! Trust in
me!

By this, you save Sardinia, you save
me!

Why the boy swoons! [*To D'O.*]
Come this side!

D'O. [*As CHARLES turns from him
to VICTOR.*]

You persist?

Vic. Yes—I conceive the gesture's
meaning. 'Faith,

He almost seems to hate you—how is
that?

Be re-assured, my Charles! Is't over
now?

Then, Marquis, tell the new King
what remains

To do! A moment's work. Del
Borgo reads

The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,
Then I sign; after that, come back
to me.

D'O. Sire, for the last time, pause!

Vic. Five minutes longer
I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesi-
tate—

And I'll so turn those minutes to
account

That . . . Ay, you recollect me !

[*Aside.*] Could I bring
My foolish mind to undergo the rearing
That Act of Abdication !

[*As CHARLES motions D'ORMEA
to precede him.*

Thanks, dear Charles !

[*CHARLES and D'ORMEA retire.*

Vic. A novel feature in the boy,—
indeed

Just what I feared he wanted most.

Quite right,

This earnest tone—your truth, now,
for effect !

It answers every purpose : with that
look,

That voice,—I hear him : “ I began
no treaty,”

(*He speaks to Spain,*) “ nor ever
dreamed of this

“ You show me ; this I from my soul
regret ;

“ But if my father signed it, bid not
me

“ Dishonour him—who gave me all,
beside.”

And, “ truth,” says Spain, “ ’twere
harsh to visit that

“ Upon the Prince.” Then come the
nobles trooping ;

“ I grieve at these exactions—I had
cut

“ This hand off ere impose them ; but
shall I

“ Undo my father's deed ?”—And they
confer :

“ Doubtless he was no party, after
all.

“ Give the Prince time !”—

Ay, give us time—but time !

Only, he must not, when the dark day
comes,

Refer our friends to me and frustrate
all.

We'll have no child's play, no despond-
ing-fits,

No Charles at each cross turn entreat-
ing Victor

To take his crown again. Guard
against that !

Enter D'ORMEA.

Long live King Charles !—

No—Charles's counsellor !

Well, is it over, Marquis ? Did I jest ?

D'O. “ King Charles !” What
then may you be ?

Vic. Anything !

A country gentleman that's cured of
bustle,

And beats a quick retreat toward
Chambery

To hunt and hawk, and leave you
noisy folk

To drive your trade without him.
I'm Count Remont—

Count Tende—any little place's Count !

D'O. Then, Victor, Captain against
Catinat,

At Staffarde, where the French beat
you ; and Duke

At Turin, where you beat the French ;
King, late,

Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sar-
dinia,

—Now, “ any little place's Count ”.

Vic. Proceed !

D'O. Breaker of vows to God, who
crowned you first ;

Breaker of vows to Man, who kept
you since ;

Most profligate to me, who outraged
God

And Man to serve you, and am made
pay crimes

I was but privy to, by passing thus

To your imbecile son—who, well you
know,

Must, (when the people here, and
nations there,

Clamour for you, the main delinquent,
slept

From King to—Count of any little
place)

—Surrender me, all left within his
reach,—

I, sir, forgive you : for I see the end—
See you on your return (you will return)

To him you trust in for the moment . . .
Vic. How ?

Trust in him ? (merely a prime-minister
This D'Ormea !) How trust in him ?

D'O. In his fear
His love,—but pray discover for your
self
What you are weakest, trusting in!
Vic. Aha,
My D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme
than this—
'n your repertory? You know old
Victor
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash—(I've
heard
Talkers who little thought the King
so close)
Felicitous, now, were't not, to provoke
him
To clean forget, one minute afterward,
His solemn act—to call the nobles
back
And pray them give again the very
power
He has abjured!—for the dear sake of
—what?
Vengeance on you! No, D'Ormea:
such am I,
Count Tende or Count anything you
please,
Only, the same that did the things
you say,
And, among other things you say not,
used
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle,—
you
I used, and now, since you will have
it so,
I leave to your fate—mere lumber in
the midst,
You and your works—Why, what on
earth beside
Are you made for, you sort of ministers?
D'O. —Not left, though, to my
fate! Your witless son
Has more wit than to load himself
with lumber:
He foils you that way, and I follow you.
Vic. Stay with my son—protect the
weaker side!
D'O. Ay, be tossed to the people
like a rag,
And flung by them to Spain and
Austria—so
Abolishing the record of your part
In all this perfidy!

Vic. Prevent, beside,
My own return!
D'O. That's half prevented now!
'Twill go hard but you'll find a
wondrous charm
'n exile, to discredit me. The Alps
Silk-mills to watch—vines asking vigi-
lance
Hounds open for the stag—your hawk's
a-wing—
Brave days that wait the Louis of the
South,
Italy's Janus!
Vic. So, the lawyer's clerk
Won't tell me that I shall repent!
D'O. You give me
Full leave to ask if you repent?
Vic. Whene'er,
Sufficient time's elapsed for that, you
judge!
[*Shouts inside, "KING CHARLES."*]
D'O. Do you repent?
Vic. [After a slight pause.] . . .
I've kept them waiting? Yes!
Come in—complete the Abdication,
sir! [They go out.]

Enter POLYXENA.

Pol. A shout? The sycophants are
free of Charles!
Oh, is not this like Italy? No fruit
Of his or my distempered fancy, this—
But just an ordinary fact! Beside,
Here they've set forms for such pro-
ceedings—Victor
Imprisoned his own mother—he should
know,
If any, how a son's to be deprived
Of a son's right. Our duty's palpable.
Ne'er was my husband for the wily
king
And the unworthy subjects—be it so!
Come you safe out of them, my
Charles! Our life
Grows not the broad and dazzling life,
I dreamed
Might prove your lot—for strength
was shut in you
None guessed but I—strength which,
untampered once,
Had little shamed your vaunted an-
cestry—

Popularity and servation, latitude,
Simplicity and utter truthfulness
—All which, they shout to lose!

So, now my work
Begins—to save him from regret. Save
Charles
Regret? the noble nature! He's no
made
Like the Italians: 'tis a German soul.

CHARLES *enters*.

Oh, where's the King's heir? Gone?
The Crown—gone? Gone?
Where's Savoy? Gone? Sardinia?
Gone!—But Charles

Is left! And when my Rhine-lan-
lowers arrive,
If he looked almost handsome yester-
twilight
As his grey eyes seemed widening into
black

Because I praised him, then how will
he look?

Farewell, you stripped and whited
mulberry-trees

Bound each to each by lazy ropes of
vine!

Now I'll teach you my language—I'm
not forced

To speak Italian now, Charles?

[*She sees the crown.*] What is this?

Answer me—who has done this?
Answer!

Cha. He!

I am King now.

Pol. Oh worst, worst, worst
of all!

Tell me—what, Victor? He has made
you King?

What's he then? What's to follow
all?

Pol. You, King?

Cha. Have I done wrong? Yes
for you were not by!

Pol. Tell me from first to last.

Cha. Hush—a new world
brightens before me: he is moved
away

The dark form that eclipsed it, he
subsides

Into a shape supporting me like you,
And I, alone, tend upward, more and
more

tend upward: I am grown Sardinia's
King.

Pol. Now stop: was not this Victor,
Duke of Savoy

At ten years old?

Cha. He was.

Pol. And the Duke spent
Since then, just four-and-fifty years in
toil

To be—what?

Cha. King.

Pol. Then why unking himself?

Cha. Those years are cause enough

Pol. The only cause?

Cha. Some new perplexities.

Pol. Which you can solve.

Although he cannot?

Cha. He assures me so

Pol. And this he means shall last
how long?

Cha. How long

I think you I fear the perils I confront

He's praising me before the people's
face—

ly people!

Pol. Then he's changed—grown
kind, the King?

Where can the trap be?

Cha. Heart and soul I pledge!

My father, could I guard the Crown
you gained,

Transmit as I received it,—all good
else

Would I surrender!

Pol. Ah, it opens then

Before you—all you dreaded formerly

You are rejoiced to be a king, my
Charles?

Cha. So much to dare? The
better—much to dread?

The better. I'll adventure tho' alone.

Triumph or die, there's Victor still to
witness

Who dies or triumphs—either way
alone!

Pol. Once I had found my share in
triumph, Charles,

Or death.

Cha. But you are I! But you I
call

To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I
tendered Heaven

A moment since. I will deserve the crown!

Pol. You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were a glorious thing
For any people, if a heart like his
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap!

Enter VICTOR.

'Tis he must show me.

Vic. So the man is—
An old man's foolish love at heart!

Spare thanks—
I know you, and Polyxena's low.
Here's Charles—I am his guest now

does he bid me
Be seated? And my light-haired,
blue-eyed child

Must not forget the old man far
away

At Chambéry, who dozes while she
reigns.

Pol. Most grateful shall we now be,
talking least

Of gratitude—indeed of anything
That hinders what yourself must have
to say

To Charles.

Cha. Pray speak, Sir!

Vic. 'Faith, not much to say—
only what shows itself, once in the
point

of sight. You are now the King:
you'll comprehend

Each you may oft have wondered at
—the shifts.

Dissimulation, wiliness I showed.

For what's our post? Here's Savoy
and here's Piedmont,

Here's Montferrat—a breadth here, a
space there—

To o'er-sweep all these, what's one
weapon worth?

I often think of how they fought in
Greece

Or Rome, which was it? You're the
scholar, Charles!

You made a front-thrust? But if your
shield, too,

Were not adroitly planted—some
shrewd knave

Reached you behind; and, him foiled,
straight if thong

And handle of that shield were not
cast loose,

And you enabled to outstrip the wind,
Fresh foes assailed you, either side;

'scape these,
And reach your place of refuge—e'en
then, odds

If the gate opened unless breath enough
Was left in you to make its lord a
speech.

Oh, you will see!

Cha. No: straight on shall I go,
Faith helping: win with it or die
with it.

Vic. 'Faith, Charles, you're not
made Europe's fighting-man!

Its barrier-guarder, if you please.
You hold,

Not take—consolidate, with envious
French

This side, with Austrians that, these
territories

I held—ay, and will hold . . . which
you shall hold

Despite the couple! But I've surely
earned

Exemption from these weary politics.
—The privilege to prattle with my son

And daughter here, tho' Europe waits
the while.

Pol. Nay, Sir. —at Chambéry, away
for ever.

As soon you'll be, 'tis a farewell we
bid you!

Turn these few fleeting moments to
account!

'Tis just as though it were a death.

Vic. Indeed!

Pol. [*Aside.*] Is the trap there?

Cha. Ay, call this parting—death!
The sacred your memory becomes.

If I misrule Sardinia, how bring be?
My father? No—that thought shall
ever urge me.

Vic. I do not mean . . .

Pol. [*Who watches VICTOR narrowly
this while.*]

Your father does not mean
That you are ruling for your father's
sake:

It is your people must concern you
wholly

Instead of him. You meant this,
Sire? (He drops
My hand!)

Cha. That People is now part of me.

Vic. About the People! I took
certain measures
Some short time since . . . Oh, I'm
aware you know

But little of my measures—these affect
The nobles—we've resumed some
grants, imposed

A tax or two; prepare yourself, in
short,

For clamours on that score: mark
me: you yield

No jot of what's entrusted you!

Pol. No jot
You yield!

Cha. My father, when I took the
oath,

Although my eye might stray in search
of yours,

I heard it, understood it, promised
God

What you require. Till from this
eminence

He moves me, here I keep, nor shall
concede

The meanest of my rights.

Vic. [*Aside.*] The boy's a fool!

Or rather, I'm a fool: for, what's
wrong here?

To-day the sweets of reigning—let to-
morrow

Be ready with its bitters.

Enter D'ORMEA.

There's beside
Somewhat to press upon your notice
first.

Cha. Then why delay it for an
instant, Sire?

That Spanish claim, perchance? And,
now you speak,

—This morning, my opinion was
mature—

Which, boy-like, I was bashful in
producing

To one, I ne'er am like to fear, in
future!

My thought is formed upon that
Spanish claim.

Vic. (Betimes, indeed.) Not now,
Charles. You require
A host of papers on it—

D'O. [*Coming forward.*] Here they
are.

[*To CHA.*] I was the minister and
much beside—

Of the late monarch: to say little, him
I served; on you I have, to say e'en
less,

No claim. This case contains those
papers: with them

I tender you my office.

Vic. [*Hastily.*] Keep him, Charles!
There's reason for it—many reasons:
you

Distrust him, nor are so far wrong
there,—but

He's mixed up in this matter—he'll
desire

To quit you, for occasions known to
me:

Do not accept those reasons—have
him stay!

Pol. [*Aside.*] His minister thrust on
us!

Cha. [*To D'ORMEA.*] Sir, believe.
In justice to myself, you do not need
Even this commending: whatsoe'er
might be

My feelings toward you as a private
man,

They quit me in the vast and untried
field

Of action. Though I shall, myself,
(as late

In your own hearing I engaged to do)
Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help

Is necessary. Think the past forgotten,
And serve me now!

D'O. I did not offer you
My services—would I could serve
you, Sire!

As for the Spanish matter . . . But

Vic. despatch

At least the dead, in my good
daughter's phrase,

Before the living! Help to house
me safe

Ere you and D'Ormea set the world
a-gape!

Here is a paper—will you overlook
What I propose reserving for my
needs?

I get as far from you as possible.
There's what I rec on my expenditure.

Cha. [*Reading*]. A miserable fifty
thousand crowns!

Vic. Oh, quite enough for country
gentlemen!

Besides the exchequer happens . . .
but find out

All that, yourself!

Cha. [*Still reading*]. "Count
Tende"—what means this?

Vic. Me: you were but an infant
when I burst

through the defile of Tende upon
France.

Had only my allies kept true to me!

No matter. Tende's, then, a name
I take

just as . . .

D'O. —The Marchioness Se-
bastian takes

the name of Spigno.

Cha. How, sir?

Vic. [*To D'ORMEA.*] Fool!

All that

Was for my own detailing. [*To*
CHARLES.] That anon!

Cha. [*To D'ORMEA.*] Explain what
you have said, sir!

D'O. I supposed

the marriage of the King to her I
named,

Profoundly kept a secret these few
weeks,

Was not to be one, now he's Count.

Pol. [*Aside.*] With us

the minister—with him the mistress!

Cha. [*To VICTOR.*] No—

tell me you have not taken her—that
woman

To live with, past recall!

Vic. And where's
the crime . . .

Pol. (*To CHARLES.*) True, sir, this
is a matter past recall,

And past your cognizance. A day
before,

And you had been compelled to note
this—now

Why note it? The King saved his
House from shame:

What the Count does, is no concern
of yours.

Cha. [*After a pause.*] The Spanish
business, D'Ormea!

Vic. Why, my son,

I took some ill-advised . . . one's
age, in fact,

Spoils everything: though I was over-
reached,

A younger brain, we'll trust, may
extricate

Sardinia readily. To-morrow, D'Or-
mea,

Inform the King!

D'O. [*Without regarding VICTOR,*
and leisurely.] Thus stands the
case with Spain:

When first the Infant Carlos claimed
his proper

Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .

Vic. I tell you, that stands over!

Let that rest!

There is the policy!

Cha. [*To D'ORMEA.*] Thus much I
know,

And more—too much: the remedy?

D'O. Of course!

No glimpse of one—

Vic. No remedy at all!

It makes the remedy itself—time
makes it.

D'O. [*To CHARLES.*] But if . . .

Vic. [*Still more hastily.*] In fine, I
shall take care of that—

And with another project that I
have . . .

D'O. [*Turning on him.*] Oh, since
Count Tende means to take
again

King Victor's crown!—

Pol. [*Throwing herself at VICTOR'S*
feet.] E'en now retake it, Sire!

Oh, speak! We are your subjects
both, once more!

Say it—a word effects it! You meant
not,

Nor do mean now, to take it—but
you must!

'Tis in you—in your nature—and the
shame's

Not half the shame 'twould grow to
afterward!

Cha. Polyxena!

Pol. A word recalls the
Knights—

Say it!—What's promising and what's
the past?

Say you are still King Victor!

D'O. Better say

The Count repents in brief!

[*VICTOR rise.*

Cha. With such a crime

I have not charged you, Sir!

Pol. Charles
turns from me!

SECOND YEAR 1731.— KING CHARLES

PART I.

*Enter QUEEN POLYXENA and
D'ORMEA—A pause.*

Pol. And now, sir, what have you
to say?

D'O. Count Tende . . .

Pol. Affirm not I betrayed you; you
resolve

On uttering this strange intelligence

—Nay, post yourself to find me ere I
reach

The capital, because you know King
Charles

Traries a day or two at Evian baths

Behind me:—but take warning,—here
and thus

[*Seating herself in the royal seat.*

I listen, if I listen—not your friend.

Explicitly the statement, if you still

Persist to urge it on me, must proceed:

I am not made for aught else.

D'O. Good!

Count Tende . . .

Pol. I, who mistrust you, shall ac-
quaint King Charles,

Who even more mistrusts you.

D'O. Does he so?

Pol. Why should he not?

D'O. Ah, why

not? Motives, seek

You virtuous people, motive—ay,
I serve

God at the devil's bidding—will th :
do?

I'm proud: our People have been
pacified

(Really I know not how) —

Pol. By truthfulness

D'O. Exactly; that shows I had
nought to do

With pacifying them: our foreign
perils

Also exceed my means to stay: but
here

'Tis otherwise, and my pride's piqued.
Count Tende

Completes a full year's absence:
would you, madam,

Have the old monarch back, his
mistress back,

His measures back? I pray you, act
upon

My counsel, or they will be.

Pol. When?

D'O. Let's think.

Home-matters settled—Victor's com-
ing now;

Let foreign matters settle—Victor's
here:

Unless I stop him; as I will, this
way.

Pol. [*Reading the paper he presents.*]

If this should prove a plot 'twixt
you and Victor?

You seek annoyances to give him pre-
text

For what you say you fear!

D'O. Oh, possibly!

I go for nothing. Only show King
Charles

That thus Count Tende purposes re-
turn,

And style me his inviter, if you please.

Pol. Half of your tale is true; most
like, the Count

Seeks to return: but why stay you
with us?

To aid in such emergencies.

D'O. Keep safe

Those papers : or, to serve me, leave
no proof

I thus have counselled : when the
Count returns,

And the King abdicates, 'twill steal
me little

To have thus counselled.

Pol. The King abdicate

D'O. He's good, we knew long
since—wise, we discover—

Firm, let us hope : but I'd have gone
to work

With him away. Well !

[*CHARLES without.*] In the Coun-
cil Chamber !

D'O. All's lost !

Pol. Oh, surely not

King Charles ! He's changed—

That's not this year's care-burthen :
voice and step :

'Tis last year's step—the Prince's
voice !

D'O. I know !

*Enter CHARLES—D'ORMEA retiring
a little.*

Cha. Now wish me joy, Polyxena !

Wish it me

The old way ! [*She embraces him.*

There was too much
cause for that !

But I have found myself again !

What's news

At Turin ? Oh, if you but felt the load
I'm free of—free ! I said this year
would end

For it, or me—but I am free, thank
God !

Pol. How, Charles ?

Cha. You do not guess

the day I found

Sardinia's hideous coil, at home,
abroad.

And how my father was involved in
it,—

Of course, I vowed to rest or smile no
more

Until I freed his name from obloquy.
We did the people right—'twas much

to gain

That point, redress our nobles' griev-
ance, too—

But that took place here, was no cry-
ing shame :

All must be done abroad.-- if I abroad
Appeased the justly-angered Powers,
destroyed

The scandal, took down Victor's
name at last

From a bad eminence, I then might
breathe

And rest ! No moment was to lose.
Behold

The proud result—a Treaty, Austria,
Spain

Agree to—

D'O. [*Aside.*] I shall merely stipu-
late

For an experienced headsman.

Cha. Not a soul

Is compromised : the blotted Past's a
blank :

Even D'Ormea will escape un-
questioned. See !

It reached me from Vienna ; I re-
mained

At Evian to despatch the Count his
news ;

'Tis gone to Chambery a week ago—
And here am I : do I deserve to feel

Your warm white arms around me ?

D'O. [*Coming forward.*] He knows
that ?

Cha. What, in Heaven's name,
means this ?

D'O. He knows that matter.

Are settled at Vienna ? Not too late !
Plainly, unless you post this very hour

Some man you trust (say, me) to
Chambery,

And take precautions I'll acquaint
you with,

Your father will return here.

Cha. Is he crazed,

This D'Ormea ? Here ? For what ?
As well return

To take his crown !

D'O. He will return for that.

Cha. [*To POLYXENA.*] You have
not listened to this man ?

Pol. He spoke

About your safety—and I listened.

[*He disengages himself from her
arms.*

Cha. [*To D'ORMEA.*] What Apprised you of the Count's intentions?
D'O. Me? His heart, Sir; you may not be used to read
 Such evidence, however; therefore read
 [*Pointing to POLYXENA's papers.*]
 My evidence.
Cha. [*To POLYXENA.*] Oh, worthy this of you!
 And of your speech I never have forgotten.
 Tho' I professed forgetfulness; which haunts me
 As if I did not know how false it was;
 Which made me toil unconsciously thus long
 That there might be no least occasion left
 For aught of its prediction coming true!
 And now, when there is left no least occasion
 To instigate my father to such crime;
 When I might venture to forget (I hoped)
 That speech and recognise Polyxena
 Oh, worthy, to revive, and tenfold worse,
 That plague now! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders
 Still in your hand! Silent?
Pol. As the wronged are.
Cha. And D'Ormea, pray, since when have you presumed
 To spy upon my father? (I conceive
 What that wise paper shows, and easily.)
 Since when?
D'O. The when, and where, and how, belong
 To me. 'Tis sad work, but I deal in such.
 You oft-times serve yourself—I'd serve you here:
 Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,
 Since the first hour he went to Chambery,
 Of his seven servants, five have I suborned.
Cha. You hate my father?
D'O. Oh, just as you will!
 [*Looking at POLYXENA.*]
 A minute since, I loved him—hate him, now!
 What matters?—If you'll ponder just one thing:
 Has he that Treaty?—He is setting forward
 Already. Are your guards here?
Cha. Well for you
 They are not! [*To POL.*] Him I knew of old, but you—
 To hear that pickthank, further his designs!
 Guards?—were they here, I'd bid them, for your trouble,
 Arrest you.
D'O. Guards you shall not want.
 I lived
 The servant of your choice, not of your need.
 You never greatly needed me till now
 That you discard me. This is my arrest.
 Again I tender you my charge—its duty
 Would bid me press you read those documents.
 Here, Sir! [*Offering his badge of office.*]
Cha. [*Taking it.*] The papers also!
 Do you think
 I dare not read them?
Pol. Read them, sir?
Cha. They prove.
 My father, still a month within the year
 Since he so solemnly consigned it me.
 Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that,
 Or my best dungeon . . .
D'O. Even say, Chambery!
 'Tis vacant, I surmise, by this.
Cha. You prove
 Your words or pay their forfeit, sir.
 Go there!
 Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil
 Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two! Do say,

You'll see the falsehood of the charges proved !
Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved
False charges—my heart's love of other times !
Pol. Ah, Charles !
Cha. [*To D'ORMEA.*] Precede me, sir !
D'O. And I'm at length
A martyr for the truth ! No end, they say,
Of miracles. My conscious innocence !
[*As they go out, enter—by the middle door—at which he pauses—VICTOR.*]
Vic. Sure I heard voices ? No !
Well, I do best
To make at once for this, the heart of the place,
The old room ! Nothing changed !—
So near my seat,
D'Ormea ? [*Pushing away the stool which is by the KING's chair.*]
I want that meeting over first,
I know not why. Tush, D'Ormea won't be slow
To hearten me, 'he supple knave !
That burst
Of spite so eased him ! He'll inform me . . .
What ?
Why come I hither ? All's in rough—let all
Remain rough ; there's full time to draw back—nay,
There's nought to draw back from, as yet ; whereas,
If reason should be, to arrest a course
Of error—reason good, to interpose
And save, as I have saved so many times,
Our House, admonish my son's giddy youth,
Relieve him of a weight that proves too much—
Now is the time,—or now, or never.
'Faith,
This kind of step is pitiful—not due
To Charles, this stealing back—hither, because

He's from his Capital ! Oh, Victor ! Victor !
But thus it is : the age of crafty men
Is loathsome : youth contrives to carry off
Dissimulation ; we may intersperse
Extenuating passages of strength,
Ardour, vivacity, and wit—may turn
E'en guile into a voluntary grace,—
But one's old age, when graces die away
And leave guile the pure staple of our lives—
Ah, loathsome !
Not so—or why pause I ? Turin
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for
The asking ; all the Army's mine—I've witnessed
Each private fight beneath me ; all the Court's
Mine too ; and, best of all, my D'Ormea's still
His D'Ormea ; no ! There's some grace clinging yet.
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight
I'd take the crown.
No ! Just this step to rise
Exhausts me ! Here am I arrived : the rest
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here
And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque
—Of the King, crownless, grey hairs and hot blood,—
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,
They say,—the eager woman with her taunts,—
And the sad earnest wife who motions me
Away—ay, there she knelt to me ! E'en yet
I can return and sleep at Chambery
A dream out. Rather shake it off at Turin,
King Victor ! Is't to Turin—yes, or no ?
'Tis this relentless noonday-lighted chamber,

Lighted like life, but silent as the grave,
 That disconcerts me! There must
 be the change—
 No silence last year: some one flung
 doors wide
 (Those two great doors which scruti-
 nise in a row)
 And out I went amid crowds of men
 men talking,
 Men watching if my lip fell or brow
 changed;
 Men saw me side forth, put me on
 my road:
 That makes the misery of this return!
 Oh, had a battle done it! Had I
 dropped
 —Haling some battle, three entire
 days old,
 Hither and thither by the forehead
 dropped
 In Spain, in Austria, best of all, in
 France—
 Spurned on its horns or underneath
 its hooves,
 When the spent monster goes upon
 its knees
 To ped and pash the prostrate wretch
 —I, Victor,
 Sole to have stood up against France
 —beat down
 By inches, brayed to pieces finally
 By some vast unimaginable charge,
 A flying hell of horse and foot and guns
 Over me, and all's lost, for ever lost,
 There's no more Victor when the
 world wakes up!
 Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,
 Throughout the world. Then after
 (as whole days
 After, you catch at intervals faint noise
 Thro' the stiff crust of frozen blood)
 there creeps
 A rumour forth, so faint, no noise at all,
 That a strange old man, with face out-
 worn for wounds,
 Is stumbling on from frontier town to
 town,
 Begging a pittance that may help him
 find
 His Turin out; what scorn and laugh-
 ter follow

The coin you fling into his cap: and
 last,

Some bright morn, how men crowd
 all at the mid!

Of the market-place, where takes the
 old king breath

Ere with his crutch he strike the
 palace-gate

Wide ope!

To Turin, yes or no—or no?

Re-enter CHARLES with papers.

Cha. Just as I thought! A miser-
 able falsehood

Of hirelings discontented with their
 pay

And longing for enfranchisement!
 A few

Festy expressions of old age that
 thinks

To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves
 By means that suit their natures!

[*Fearing them*] Thus

they shake

My faith in Victor!

[*Turning, he discovers VICTOR.*

Vic. [*After a pause.*] Not at Evian,
 Charles?

What's this? Why do you run to
 close the doors?

No welcome for your father?

Cha. [*Aside.*] Not his voice

What would I give for one imperious
 tone

Of the old sort! That's gone for
 ever.

Vic.

Must

I ask once more . . .

Cha. No—I concede it, sir!

You are returned for . . . true, your
 health declines—

True, Chambéry's a bleak unkindly
 spot;

You'd choose one fitter for your final
 lodge—

Veneria—or Moncagliè—ay, that's
 close,

And I concede it.

Vic.

I received advices

Of the conclusion of the Spanish
 matter

Dated from Evian baths . . .

Cha. And you forbore
To visit me at Evian, satisfied
The work I had to do would fully
task
The little wit I have, and that your
presence
Would only disconcert me—
Vic. Charles?
Cha. —Me—set
For ever in a foreign course to yours,
And . . .

Sir, this way of wile were
good to catch,
But I have not the sleight of it. The
truth!
Though I sink under it! What brings
you here?
Vic. Not hope of this reception,
certainly,
From one who'd scarce assume a
stranger mode
Of speech, did I return to bring
about
Some awfulest calamity!

Cha. —You mean,
Did you require your crown again!
Oh yes,
I should speak otherwise! But turn
not that
To jesting! Sir, the truth! Your
health declines?
Is aught deficient in your equipage?
Wisely you seek myself to make
complaint,
And foil the malice of the world which
laughs
At petty discontents; but I shall care
That not a soul knows of this visit.
Speak!

Vic. [*Aside.*] Here is the grateful,
much-professing son
Who was to worship me, and for
whose sake
I think to waive my plans of public
good!
[*Loud.*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek
to take once more
My crown, were so disposed to plague
myself—
What would be warrant for this
bitterness?

I gave it—grant, I would resume it—
well?

Cha. I should say simply—leaving
out the why
And how—you made me swear to
keep that crown:
And as you then intended . . .

Vic. Fool!
What way
Could I intend or not intend? As
man,
With a man's life, when I say "I
intend."
I can intend up to a certain point,
No further. I intended to preserve
The Crown of Savoy and Sardinia
whole:
And if events arise demonstrating
The way I took to keep it, rather's
like
To lose it . . .

Cha. Keep within your
sphere and mine!
It is God's province we usurp on, else,
Here, blindfold thro' the maze of
things we walk
By a slight thread of false, true, right
and wrong;
All else is rambling and presump-
tion. I

Have sworn to keep this kingdom:
there's my truth.

Vic. Truth, boy, is here—within
my breast; and in
Your recognition of it, truth is, too:
And in the effect of all this tortuous
dealing

With falsehood, used to carry out the
truth,

—In its success, this falsehood turns,
again,

Truth for the world! But you are
right: these themes
Are over-subtle. I should rather say
In such a case, frankly,—it fails, my
scheme:

I hoped to see you bring about, your-
self,

What I must bring about: I interpose
On your behalf—with my son's good
in sight—

To hold what he is nearly letting go—

Confirm his title—add a grace, per-
hap—

There's Sicily, for instance,—granted
me

And taken back, some years since—
till I give

That island with the rest, my work's
half done.

For his sake, therefore, as of those he
rules . . .

Cha. Our sakes are one—and that,
you could not say,

Because my answer would present
itself

Forthwith: a year has wrought an
age's change:

This people's not the people now, you
once

Could benefit; nor is my policy
Your policy.

Vic. [*With an outburst.*] I know
it! You undo

All I have done—my life of toil and
care!

I left you this the absolute rule
In Europe—do you think I will sit
still

And see you throw all power off to the
people

See my Sardinia, that has stood apart,
Join in the mad and democratic whirl.

Whereto I see all Europe haste full-
tide?

England casts off her kings—France
mimics England—

This realm I hoped was safe! Yet
here I talk,

When I can save it, not by force alone,
But bidding plagues, which follow
sons like you,

Fasten upon my disobedient . . .

[*Recollecting himself.*] Surely
I could say this—if minded so—my
son?

Cha. You could not! Bitterer
curses than your curse

I have I long since denounced upon
myself

If I misused my power. In fear of
these

I entered on those measures—will
abide

By them: so, I should say, Count
Tende . . .

Vic. . . . No!

But no! But if, my Charles, you
more than old—

Half-foolish father urged these argu-
ments,

And then confessed them futile, but
said plainly

That he forgot his promise, found his
strength

Fail him, had thought at savage
Chambery

Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli
here,

And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga
Pined for the pleasant places he had
built

When he was fortunate and young—
Cha. . . . My father!

Vic. Stay yet—and if he said he
could not die

Deprived of baubles he had put aside,
He deemed, for ever—of the Crown

that binds
Your brain up, whole, sound, and im-
pregnable,

Creating kingliness—the Sceptre, too.
Whose mere wind, should you wave
it, back would beat

Invaders—and the golden Ball which
throbs

As if you grasped the palpitating heart
Indeed o' the realm, to mould as you
may choose!

—If I must totter up and down the
streets

My sires built, where myself have
introduced

And fostered laws and letters, sciences,
The civil and the military arts—

Stay, Charles—I see you letting me
pretend

To live my former self once more—
King Victor,

The venturous yet politic—they style
me

Again, the Father of the Prince—
friends wink

Good-humouredly at the delusion you
So sedulously guard from all rough
truths

That else would break upon the
dotage! You—

Whom now I see preventing my old
shame—

I tell not, point by cruel point, my
tale—

For is't not in your breast my brow
is hid!

Is not your hand extended? Say
you not . . .

*Enter D'ORMEA, leading in
POLYXENA.*

*P.O. [Advancing and withdrawing
CHARLES—to VICTOR.]*

In this conjuncture, even, he would
say—

Tho' with a moistened eye and
quivering lip)

The suppliant is my father—I must
save

A great man from himself, nor see
him fling

His well-earned fame away: there
must not follow

Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth
So absolute: no enemy shall learn,

He thrust his child 'twixt danger and
himself,

And, when that child somehow stood
danger out,

Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin
Charles

Body, that's much,—and soul, that's
more—and realm,

That's most of all! No enemy shall
say . . .

P.O. Do you repent, sir?

Vic. [Resuming himself.] D'Ormea?
This is well!

Worthily done, King Charles, craftily
done!

Judiciously you post these, to o'erhear
The little your importunate father
thrusts

Himself on you to say! Ay, they'll
correct

The amiable blind facility
You showed in answering his peevish
suit:

What can he need to sue for? Bravely,
D'Ormea,

Have you fulfilled your office: but
for you,

The old Count might have drawn
some few more livres

To swell his income! Had you,
Lady, missed

The moment, a permission had been
granted

To build afresh my ruinous old pile—
But you remembered properly the list

Of wise precautions I took when I
gave

Nearly as much away—to reap the
fruits

I should have looked for '—
Cha. Thanks,

—sir: degrade me,
So you remain yourself. Adieu!

Vic. I'll not
Forget it for the future, nor presume

Next time to slight such potent
mediators!

Had I first moved them both to
intercede,

I might have had a chamber in
Moncaglièr

—Who knows?
Cha. Adieu!

Vic. You bid me
this adieu

With the old spirit?
Cha. Adieu!

Vic. Charles—
Cha. Adieu!

[VICTOR goes.]
Cha. You were mistaken, Marquis,

as you hear!

'Twas for another purpose the Count
came.

The Count desires Moncaglièr. Give
the order!

D'O. [Leisurely.] Your minister has
lost your confidence,

Asserting late, for his own purposes,
Count Tende would . . .

Cha. [Flinging his badge back.] Be
still our minister!

And give a loose to your insulting joy—
It irks me more thus stifled than ex-

pressed.
Loose it!

D'O. There's none to loose, | In virtue of that first sprout keep their
 style
 I never aim to die a martyr!
Charles! Amid the forest's green fraternity.
 Thus I shoot up—to surely get lopped
 down,
 And bound up for the burning. Now
 for it!

Enter CHARLES and POLYXENA with Attendants.

KING CHARLES

PART II.

Night. — D'ORMEA seated, folding papers he has been examining.

This at the last effects it: now, King
 Charles
 Or else King Victor—that's a balance:
 now
 For D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either
 turn
 Of the scale, that's sure enough. A
 pound to solve,
 My masters—moralists—whate'er's
 your style!
 When you discover why I push myself
 Into a path you'd pass safely by,
 Impart to me among the rest! No
 matter.
 Prompt are the righteous ever with
 their rede
 To us the wicked—lesson them this
 once!
 For safe among the wicked are you
 set,
 Old D'Ormea. We lament life's
 brevity,
 Yet quarter e'en the threescore years
 and ten.
 Nor stick to call the quarter roundly
 "life."
 D'Ormea was wicked, say, some
 twenty years;
 A tree so long was stunted: afterward,
 What if it grew, continued growing,
 till
 No fellow of the forest equalled it?
 'Twas a shrub then—a shrub it still
 must be:
 While forward saplings, at the outset
 checked,

D'O. [Rings.] Sire, in the due dis-
 charge of this my office
 This enforced summons of yourself
 from Turin,

And the disclosure I am bound to
 make
 To-night,—there must already be, I
 feel,

So much that wounds . . .
Cha. Well, sir?

D'O. —That I, perchance,
 May utter, also, what, another time,
 Would irk much,—it may prove less
 irksome now.

Cha. What would you utter?

D'O. That I from my soul
 Grieve at to-night's event: for you I
 grieve—

E'en grieve for . . .
Cha. Tush, another time for
 talk!

My kingdom is in imminent danger?
D'O. Let

The Count communicate with France
 —its King,

His grandson, will have Fleury's aid
 for this,

Though for no other war.

Cha. First for the levies:
 What forces can I muster presently?

[D'ORMEA delivers papers which
 CHARLES inspects.]

Cha. Good—very good. Montorio
 . . . how is this?

—Equips me double the old comple-
 ment

Of soldiers?

D'O. Since his land has been
 relieved

From double impost, this he manages:
 But under the late monarch . . .

Cha. Peace. I know.

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

311

Count Spava has sent out word that
What power is to lead the troops of

his.
D'O. Count Spava means to lead
his troops himself.

Something's to fight for now; "where-
" says he.

"Under the Sovereign's father"
Cha. It would seem

that all my people love me.

D'O. Yes.
[*To POLYXENA while CHARLES con-
tinues to inspect the troops.*]

A temper
Like Victor's may avail to keep a
state;

He terrifies men and they fall not off;
Good to restrain; best, if restraint
will all

But, with the silent circle round him
such sway. Our King's begins pre-
cisely there.

For to suggest, impel, and set
work,
Is quite another function. Men may
light.

In time of peace, the King who
brought them peace;

In war,—his voice, his eyes, help more
than fear.

They love you, Sire!

Cha. [*To Attendants.*] Bring the
Regalia forth.

Quit the room. And now, Marquis,
answer me—

Why should the King of France in-
vade my realm?

D'O. Why? Did I not acquaint
your Majesty

An hour ago?

Cha. I choose to hear again
What then I heard.

D'O. Because, Sire, as I said,
rather is resolved to have the
crown

any risk; and, as I judge, calls in
these foreign troops to aid him.

Cha. And your reason
For saying this?

D'O. [*Aside.*] Ay, just his father's
way

[*Exit D'O.*] The Count wrote yesterday
to my father, the King.

Rhebinder,—made demand of help
To try

Rhebinder—he's of alien blood: augl.
else?

D'O. Receiving a refusal,—some
hours after.

The Count called on Del Borja to de-
liver

The Act of Abdication: he refusing,
Or hesitating, rather

Cha. What ensued?

D'O. At midnight, only two hours
since, at Turin.

He rode in person to the Citadel
With one attendant, to the Soccorso

And bade the governor, San Remo,
open

Admit him.

Cha. For a purpose, I divine.
He and three were faithful, then?

D'O. They told it me;
And I—

Cha. Most faithful—
D'O. Tell it you with this.

Moreover, of my own, it, on hear
hence,

You have not interposed, the Count
will be

Upon his road to France for succour.
Cha. Good!

You do your duty, now, to me your
monarch

Fully, I warrant?—be ye that is, your
project

For saving both of us disgrace, past
a doubt?

D'O. Have my counsel,—and the
only one.

A month since, I besought you to em-
ploy

Restraints which had prevented many
a pang.

But now the harsher course must be
pursued.

These papers, made for the emergency,
Will pain you to subscribe: this is a
list

Of those suspected merely—men to
watch;

This—of the few of the Count's very household.

You must, however reluctantly, arrest; While here's a method of remonstrance (—sure

Not stronger than the case demands) to take

With the Count's self.

Cha. Deliver those three papers.

Pol. [*While CHARLES inspects them —to D'ORMEA*]

Your measures are not over-harsh, sir: France

Will hardly be deterred from coming hither

By these.

D'O. What good of my proposing measures

Without a chance of their success? E'en these,

Hear what he'll say at my presenting.

Cha. [*Who has signed them.*] There! About the warrants! You've my signature.

What turns you pale? I do my duty by you

In acting boldly thus on your advice.

D'O. [*Reading them separately.*]

Arrest the people I suspected merely?

Cha. Did you suspect them?

D'O. Doubtless: but—but—Sire.

This Forquieri's governor of Turin;

And Rivarol and he have influence over Half of the capital.—Rabella, too?

Why, Sire—

Cha. Oh, leave the fear to me.

D'O. [*Still reading.*] You bid me Incarcerate the people on this list?

Sire—

Cha. Why, you never bade arrest those men,

So close related to my father too,

On trifling grounds?

D'O. Oh, as for that, St. George,

President of Chambery's senators,

Is hatching treason—but—

[*Still more troubled.*] Sire, Count Cumiane

Is brother to your father's wife!

What's here?

Arrest the wife herself?

Cha. You seem to think it A venial crime to plot against me.

Well?

D'O. [*Who has read the last paper.*]

Wherefore am I thus ruined?

Why not take

My life at once? This poor formality

Is, let me say, unworthy you! Prevent it.

You, madam! I have served you, and prepared

For all disgraces—only, let disgrace

Be plain, be proper—proper for the world

To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me!

Take back your warrant—I will none of it.

Cha. Here is a man to talk of fickleness!

He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood;

I bid him—

D'O. Not you! Were he trebly false,

You do not bid me—

Cha. Is't not written there?

I thought so: give— I'll set it right.

D'O. Is it there?

Oh, yes—and plain—arrest him—now—drag here

Your father! And were all six times as plain,

Do you suppose I'd trust it?

Cha. Just one word!

You bring him, taken in the act of flight,

Or else your life is forfeit.

D'O. Ay, to Turin

I bring him? And to-morrow?

Cha. Here and now!

The whole thing is a lie—a hateful lie—

As I believed and as my father said.

I knew it from the first, but was compelled

To circumvent you; and the crafty

D'Ormea,

That baffled Alberoni and tricked

Coscia,

The miserable sower of such discord

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

313

Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last!

Oh, I see! you arrive—this plan of yours,

Weak as it is, torments sufficiently

A sick, old, peevish man—wings hasty speech

And ill-considered threats from him; that's noted;

Then out you ferret papers, his amusement

In lonely hours of lassitude—examine The day-by-day report of your paid creatures—

And back you come—all was not ripe, you find,

And, as you hope, may keep from ripening yet—

But you were in bare time! Only, 'twere best

I never saw my father—these old men Are potent in excuses—and, meantime, D'Ormea's the man I cannot do without.

Pol. Charles—

Cha. Ah, no question! You're for D'Ormea too!

You'd have me eat and drink, and sleep, live, die

With this lie coil'd about me, choking me!

No, no—he's caught! [*To D'ORMEA.*]

You venture life, you say, Upon my father's perfidy; and I Have, on the whole, no right to disregard

The chains of testimony you thus wind About me; though I do—do from my soul

Discredit them: still I must authorise These measures—and I will. *Perugia!*

[*Many Officers enter.*] Count— You and Solar, with all the force you have,

Are at the Marquis' orders: what he bids,

Implicitly perform! You are to bring A traitor here; the man that's likeliest one

At present, fronts me; you are at his beck

For a full hour; he undertakes to show you

A fouler than himself,—but, failing that,

Return with him, and, as my father lives,

He dies this night! The clemency you've blamed

So oft, shall be revoked—rights exercised

That I've abjured.

[*To D'ORMEA.*] Now, Sir, about the work!

To save your king and country! Take the warrant!

D'O. [*Boldly to PERUGIA.*] You hear the Sovereign's mandate, Count Perugia?

Obeys me! As your diligence, expect

Reward! All follow to Montecagliet!

Cha. [*In great anguish.*] D'Ormea! [*D'ORMEA goes.*]

He goes, lit up with that appalling smile!

[*To POLYXENA after a pause.* At least you understand all this?

Pol. These means Of our defence—these measures of precaution?

Cha. It must be the best way. I should have else

Withered beneath his scorn.

Pol. What would you say?

Cha. Why, you don't think I mean to keep the crown,

Polyxena?

Pol. You then believe the story

In spite of all—That Victor's coming?

Cha. Believe it?

I know that he is coming—feel the strength

That has upheld me leave me at his coming!

'Twas mine, and now he takes his own again.

Some kinds of strength are well enough to have;

But who's to have that strength? Let my crown go!

I meant to keep it—but I cannot—cannot!

Only, he shall not taunt me,—he the first—

See if he would not be the first to taunt me

With having left his kingdom at a word—
 With letting it be conquered without stroke—
 With . . . no—no—'tis no worse than when he left it,
 I've just to bid him take it, and, that over,
 We'll fly away—fly—for I loathe this Turin.
 This Rivoli, all titles loathe, and state.
 We'd best go to your country—unless God
 Send I die now!

Pol. Charles, hear me!
Cha. —And again
 Shall you be my Polyxena—you'll take me
 Out of this woe! Yes, do speak—and keep speaking!
 I would not let you speak just now, for fear
 You'd counsel me against him: but talk, now,
 As we two used to talk in blessed times:
 Bid me endure all his caprices; take me
 From this mad post above him!

Pol. I believe
 We are undone, but from a different cause.
 All your resources, down to the least guard,
 Are now at D'Ormea's beck. What if, this while,
 He acts in concert with your father?
 We
 Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli—
 Where find a better place for them?

Cha. [*Pacing the room.*] And why
 Does Victor come? To undo all that's done!
 Restore the past—prevent the future!
 Seat
 His mistress in your seat, and place in mine
 . . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there,
 To ask of, to consult with, to care for,
 To hold up with your hands? Whom?
 One that's false—

False—from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false!
 The best is, that I knew it in my heart
 From the beginning, and expected this,
 And hated you, Polyxena, because
 You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him,
 Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while
 He prayed for me,—nay, while he kissed my brow,
 I saw—
Pol. But if your measures take effect,
 And D'Ormea's true to you?
Cha. Then worst of all!
 I shall have loosed that callous wretch on him!
 Well may the woman taunt him with his child—
 I, eating here his bread, clothed in his clothes,
 Seated upon his seat, give D'Ormea leave
 To outrage him! We talk—perchance they tear
 My father from his bed—the old hands feel
 For one who is not, but who should be there—
 And he finds D'Ormea! D'Ormea too, finds him!
 —The crowded chamber when the lights go out—
 Closed doors—the horrid scuffle in the dark—
 The accursed promptings of the minute! My guards!
 To horse—and after, with me—and prevent!

Pol. [*Seizing his hand.*] King Charles! Pause here upon this strip of time
 Allotted you out of eternity!
 Crowns are from God—in his name you hold yours.
 Your life's no least thing, were it fit your life
 Should be abjured along with rule; but now,
 Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule—

You, who would vulgarly look fine !
 enough
 In the world's eye, deserting your
 soul's charge,—
 Ay, you would have men's praise—
 this Rivoli
 Would be illumined : while, as 'tis,
 no doubt,
 Something of stain will ever rest on
 you ;
 No one will rightly know why you
 refused
 To abdicate ; they'll talk of deeds you
 could
 Have done, no doubt,—nor do I
 much expect
 Future achievements will blot out the
 past,
 Envelop it in haze—nor shall we two
 Be happy any more ; 'twill be, I feel,
 Only in moments that the duty's seen
 As palpably as now—the months, the
 years
 Of painful indistinctness are to come,
 While daily must we tread these palace
 rooms
 Pregnant with memories of the past :
 your eye
 May turn to mine and find no comfort
 there,
 Through fancies that beset me, as
 yourself,
 Of other courses, with far other issues.
 We might have taken this great night
 —such bear
 As I will bear ! What matters happi-
 ness ?
 Duty ! There's man's one moment—
 this is yours !

*[Putting the crown on his head,
 and the sceptre in his hand, she
 places him on his seat: a long
 pause and silence.]*

Enter D'ORMEA and VICTOR.

Vic. At last I speak ; but once—
 that once, to you !

'Tis you I ask, not these your varletry,
 Who's King of us ?

Cha. *[From his seat.]* Count
 Tende . . .

Vic. What your spies

Assert I ponder in my soul, I say
 Here to your face, amid your guards !
 I choose

To take again the crown whose shadow
 I gave —

For still its potency surrounds the
 weak

White locks their felon hands have
 discomposed.

Or, I'll not ask who's King, but
 simply, who

Withholds the crown I claim ? De-
 liver it !

I have no friend in the wide world :
 nor France

Nor England cares for me : you see
 the sum

Of what I can avail. Deliver it !

Cha. Take it, my father !

And now say in turn,

Was it done well, my father—sure not
 well,

To try me thus ! I might have seen
 much cause

For keeping it—too easily seen cause !
 But, from that moment, e'en more

woefully
 My life had pined away, than pine
 it will.

Already you have much to answer for.
 My life to pine is nothing,—her sunk
 eyes

Were happy once ! No doubt, my
 people think

That I'm their King still . . . but I
 cannot strive !

Take it !

Vic. *[One hand on the crown
 CHARLES offers, the other on his
 neck.]* So few years give it quietly,

My son ! It will drop from me. See
 you not ?

A crown's unlike a sword to give
 away—

That, let a strong hand to a weak
 hand give !

But crowns should slip from palsied
 brows to heads,

Young as this head—yet mine is weak
 enough,

E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for
 phrases

To vindicate my right. 'Tis of a piece!

All is alike gone by with me—who beat

Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines!

To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis' rival,

And now . . .

Cha. [*Putting the crown on him, to the rest.*] The King speaks, yet none kneels, I think!

Vic. I am then King! As I became a King

Despite the nations—kept myself a King—

So I die King, with Kingship dying too Around me! I have lasted Europe's time!

What wants my story of completion? Where

Must needs the damning break show! Who mistrusts

My children here—tell they of any break

'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall?

And who were by me when I died but they?

Who?—D'Ormea there!

Cha. What means he?

Vic. Ever there!

Charles—how to save your story? Mine must go!

Say—say that you refused the crown to me—

Charles, yours shall be my story! You immured

Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year I spend without a sight of you, then die—

That will serve every purpose—tell that tale

The world!

Cha. Mistrust me? Help!

Vic. Past help, past reach

'Tis in the heart—you cannot reach the heart:

This broke mine, that I did believe, you, Charles,

Would have denied and so disgraced me.

Pol.

Charles
Has never ceased to be your subject, Sire!

He reigned at first through setting up yourself

As pattern: if he e'er seemed harsh to you,

'Twas from a too intense appreciation Of your own character: he acted you—

Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,

Or look for any other than this end. I hold him worlds the worse on that account;

But so it was.

Cha. [*To POLYX.*] I love you, now, indeed!

[*To VICTOR.*] You never knew me!

Vic. Hardly till this moment, When I seem learning many other things,

Because the time for using them is past.

If 'twere to do again! That's idly wished.

Truthfulness might prove policy as good

As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead? Yes—

I've made it fitter now to be a Queen's Than formerly—I've ploughed the deep lines there

Which keep too well a crown from slipping off!

No matter. Guile has made me King again.

Louis—'twas in King Victor's time—long since,

When Louis reign'd—and, also, Victor reign'd—

How the world talks already of us two! God of eclipse and each discolour'd star,

Why do I linger then?

Ha! Where lurks he?

D'Ormea! Come nearer to your King! Now stand!

[*Collecting his strength as D'ORMEA approaches.*]

But you lied, D'Ormea! I do not repent.

[*Dies.*]

DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS

[Originally published in "*Bells and Pomegranates*,"
No. III. (1842), and No. VII. (1845), and re-
issued as "*Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*"
in POEMS BY ROBERT BROWNING in 1849.]

INSCRIBED

TO

JOHN KENYON, ESQ.,

IN THE HOPE THAT A RECOLLECTION OF HIS OWN SUCCESSFUL
"RHYMED PLEA FOR TOLERANCE"

MAY INDUCE HIM TO ADMIT GOOD-NATUREDLY THIS HUMBLER

PROSE ONE OF

HIS VERY GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

R. B.

DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS

CAVALIER TUNES

I.—MARCHING ALONG.

I.

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament
 swing :
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
 And see the rogues flourish and honest
 folk droop,
 Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this
 song.

II.

God for King Charles ! Pym and such
 carles
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their
 treasonous parles !
 Cavaliers, up ! Lips from the cup,
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take
 nor sup
 Till you're (*Chorus*) *marching along,*
fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this
song.

III.

Hampden to Hell, and his obsequies'
 knell
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young
 Harry as well !
 England, good cheer ! Rupert is
 near !
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not
 here
 (*Cho.*) *Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing
this song !

IV.

Then, God for King Charles ! Pym
 and his snarls
 To the Devil that pricks on such pesti-
 lent carles !
 Hold by the right, you double your
 might ;
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for
 the fight,
 (*Cho.*) *March we along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing
this song !

II.—GIVE A ROUSE.

I.

King Charles, and who'll do him
 right now ?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight
 now ?
 Give a rouse : here's, in Hell's despite
 now,
 King Charles !

II.

Who gave me the goods that went
 since ?
 Who raised me the house that sank
 once ?
 Who helped me to gold I spent since ?
 Who found me in wine you drank
 once ?
 (*Cho.*) *King Charles, and who'll do him*
right now ?
King Charles, and who's ripe for
fight now ?
Give a rouse : here's, in Hell's
despite now,
King Charles !

III.

To whom used my boy George quaff
else,
By the old fool's side that begot
him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh
else.
While Noll's damned troopers shot
him?

(Cho.) *King Charles, and who'll do him
right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for
fight now?
Give a rouse; here's, in Hell's
despite not
King Charles*

III.--BOOT AND SADDLE.

I.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my Castle, before the hot
day
Brightens to blue from its silvery
grey,

(Cho.) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

II.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd
say;
Many's the friend there, will listen
and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up
the lay,

(Cho.) *"Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!"*

III.

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Round-
heads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this,
by my fay,

(Cho.) *"Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!"*

IV.

Who? My wife Gertrude; that,
honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering,
"Nay!
"I've better counsellors; what counsel
they?

(Cho.) *"Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!"*

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on
the wall,
Looking as if she were alive ; I call
That piece a wonder, now : Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she
stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her ?
I said
" Frà Pandolf " by design, for never
read
Strangers like you that pictured counte-
nance,
The depth and passion of its earnest
glance,
But to myself they turned (since none
puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but
I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if
they durst,
How such a glance came there ; so,
not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir,
'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called
that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : per-
haps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say " Her
mantle laps
" Over my Lady's wrist too much,"
or " Paint
" Must never hope to reproduce the
faint
" Half-flush that dies along her
throat ; " such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause
enough

For calling up that spot of joy. She
had
A heart . . . how shall I say ? . . .
too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed ; she liked what-
e'er
She looked on, and her looks went
everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one ! My favour at her
breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the
West,
The bough of cherries some officious
fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white
mule
She rode with round the terrace—all
and each
Would draw from her alike the ap-
proving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,
—good ; but thanked
Somehow . . . I know not how . . .
as if she ranked
My gift of a nine hundred years old
name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop
to blame
This sort of trifling ? Even had you
skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to
make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say
" Just this
" Or that in you disgusts me ; here
you miss,
" Or there exceed the mark "—and if
she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse, E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt, Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet The company below, then. I repeat,	The Count your Master's known munificence Is ample warrant that no just pre- tence Of mine for dowry will be dis- allowed; Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, tho', Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.
---	---

COUNT GISMOND

AIX IN PROvence

I.

CHRIST God, who savest men, save
 most
Of men Count Gismond who saved
 me !
Count Gauthier, when he chose his
 post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it ; when he struck at length
My honour 'twas with all his strength.

II.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have
 schemed !
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in Queen's array
To give our Tourney prize away.

III.

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves ; 'twas all
 their deed ;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face ;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have
 dropped
A word, and straight the play had
 stopped.

IV.

They, too, so beauteous ! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast ;
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head !

V.

But no : they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through,
 adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

VI.

And come out on the morning troop
Of merry friends who kissed my
 cheek,
And called me Queen, and made me
 stoop
Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft
 dun)—

VII.

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My Queen's day—Oh, I think the
 cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud !

VIII.

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down ; 'twas time I should
 present
The victor's crown, but . . . there,
 'twill last
No long time . . . the . . . mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain !

IX.

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
 With his two boys: I can proceed.
 Well, at that moment, who should stalk
 Forth boldly (to my face, indeed)
 But Gauthier, and he thundered
 "Stay!"
 And all stayed. "Bring no crowns,
 I say!"

X.

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-
 sheet
 "About her! Let her shun the
 chaste,
 "Or lay herself before their feet!
 "Shall she, whose body I embraced
 "A night long, queen it in the day?
 "For Honour's sake no crowns, I
 say!"

XI.

I? What I answered? As I live,
 I never fancied such a thing
 As answer possible to give.
 What says the body when they spring
 Some monstrous torture - engine's
 whole
 Strength on it? No more says the
 soul.

XII.

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
 That I was saved. I never met
 His face before, but, at first view,
 I felt quite sure that God had set
 Himself to Satan; who would spend
 A minute's mistrust on the end?

XIII.

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
 Gave him the lie, then struck his
 mouth
 With one back-handed blow that wrote
 In blood men's verdict there.
 North, South,
 East, West, I looked. The lie was
 dead.
 And damned, and truth stood up in-
 stead.

XIV.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
 The heart of the joy, with my con-
 tent
 In watching Gismond unallied
 By any doubt of the even.
 God took that on him - I was bid
 Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

XV.

Did I not watch him while he let
 His armourer just brace his greaves,
 Rivet his hauberk, on the flint
 The while! His foot . . . my
 memory leaves
 No least stamp out, nor how men
 He pulled his ringing gauntlet . . .

XVI.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
 Was finished, prone lay the fal-
 Knight,
 Prone as his lie, upon the ground:
 Gismond flew at him, used no
 sleight
 Of the sword, but open-breasted drove,
 Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

XVII.

Which done, he dragged him to my
 feet
 And said "Here die, but end thy
 breath
 "In full confession, lest thou fleet
 "From my first, to God's second
 death!
 "Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I
 have lied
 "To God and her," he said, and died.

XVIII.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
 —What safe my heart holds, tho'
 no word
 Could I repeat now, if I tasked
 My powers for ever, to a third
 Dear even as you are. Pass the
 rest
 Until I sank upon his breast.

XIV.

Over my head his arm he flung
Against the world; and scarce I
felt
His sword, that dripped by me and
wing,

A little shifted in its belt, —
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

XX.

so 'mid the shouting multitude
We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
Their life, untroubled as before

I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-
place
God lighten! May his soul find
grace!

XXI.

Our elder boy has got the clear
Great brow; tho' when his brother's
black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond
here?
And have you brought my tercel
back?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since
May.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

I.

You know, we French stormed
Ratisbon :
A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoléon
Stood on our storming-day ;
With neck out - thrust, you fancy
how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II.

Just as perhaps he mused " My
plans
" That soar, to earth may fall,
" Let once my army-leader Lannes,
" Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there
flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

III.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy :
You hardly could suspect—

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came thro')
You looked twice ere you saw his
breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV.

" Well," cried he, " Emperor, by
God's grace
" We've got you Ratisbon !
" The Marshal's in the market-place,
" And you'll be there anon
" To see your flag-bird flap his vans
" Where I, to heart's desire,
" Perched him ! " The Chief's eye
flashed ; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V.

The Chief's eye flashed ; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes :
" You're wounded ! " " Nay," his
soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said :
" I'm killed, Sir ! " And, his Chief
beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

I.

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhor-
rence !

Water your damned flower-pots, do !
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you !
What ? your myrtle-bush wants trim-
ming ?

Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming ?
Hell dry you up with its flames !

II.

At the meal we sit together :
Salve tibi ! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year :
Not a plenteous cork-crop : scarcely
Dare we hope oal' 'lls, I doubt :
What's the Latin na. for "parsley" ?
What's the Greek name for Swine's
Snout ?

III.

Whew ! We'll have our platter bur-
nished,
Laid with care on our own shelf !
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L. for our initial !
(He, he ! There his lily snaps !)

IV.

Saint, forsooth ! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank,
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horse-
hairs,
—Can't I see his dead eye glow
Bright, as 'twere a Barbary corsair's ?
(That is, if he'd let it show !)

V.

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays

Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I, the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian frustrate ;
While he drains his at one gulp !

VI.

Oh, those melons ! If he's able
We're to have a feast ; so nice !
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How goonyour flowers? Nonedouble?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy ?
Strange !—And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep 'em close-nipped on the sly !

VII.

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails.
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of Heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to Hell, a Manichee ?

VIII.

Or, my scrofulous French novel,
On grey paper with blunt type !
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe :
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't ?

IX.

Or, there's Satan !—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of ! *Hy, Zy,*
Hine . . .
'St, there's Vespers ! *Plena gratia*
Ave, Virgo ! Gr-r-r—you swine !

IN A GONDOLA

He sings.

I SEND my heart up to thee, all my
heart
In this my singing !
For the stars help me, and the sea
bears part ;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets to leave one
space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its
dwelling-place.

She speaks.

Say after me, and try to say
My very words, as if each word
Came from you of your own accord,
In your own voice, in your own way :
"This woman's heart, and soul, and
brain
"Are mine as much as this gold chain
"She bids me wear ; which" (say
again)
"I choose to make by cherishing
"A precious thing, or choose to fling
"Over the boat-side, ring by ring."
And yet once more say . . . no word
more !
Since words are only words. Give
o'er !
Unless you call me, all the same,
Familiarly by my pet-name
Which, if the Three should hear you
call,
And me reply to, would proclaim
At once our secret to them all :
Ask of me, too, command me, blame—
Do break down the partition-wall
'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds
Curtained in dusk and splendid folds.

What's left but—all of me to take ?
I am the Three's ; prevent them, slake
Your thirst ! 'Tis said, the Arab sage
In practising with gems can loose
Their subtle spirit in his cruce
And leave but ashes : so, sweet mage,
Leave them my ashes when thy use
Sucks out my soul, thy heritage !

He sings.

1.

Past we glide, and past, and past !
What's that poor Agnese doing
Where they make the shutters fast ?
Grey Zanobi's just a-wooing
To his couch the purchased bride :
Past we glide !

2.

Past we glide, and past, and past !
Why's the Pucci Palace flaring
Like a beacon to the blast ?
Guests by hundreds—not one caring
If the dear host's neck were wried :
Past we glide !

She sings.

1.

The Moth's kiss, first !
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up ; so, here and there
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide open burst.

2.

The Bee's kiss, now !
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday.

A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.

He sings.

1.

What are we two?
I am a Jew,
And carry thee, farther than friends
can pursue,
To a feast of our tribe,
Where they need thee to bribe
The devil that blasts them unless he
imbibe
Thy . . . Shatter the vision for ever!
And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

2.

Say again, what we are?
The sprite of a star,
I lure thee above where the Destinies
bar
My plumes their full play
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is
withering away
Some . . . Shatter the vision for ever!
And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

He muses.

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?
The land's lap or the water's breast?
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,
Or swim in lucid shallows, just
Bluding water-lily leaves,
An inch from Death's black fingers,
thrust
To lock you, whom release he must;
Which life were best on Summer eves?

He speaks, musing.

Lie back; could thought of mine im-
prove you?
From this shoulder let there spring
A wing; from this, another wing;
Wings, not legs and feet, shall move
you!

Snow-white must they spring, to blend
With your flesh, but I intend
They shall deepen to the end,
Broader, into burning gold,
Till both wings crescent-wise enfold
Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet
To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet
As if a million sword-blades hurled
Defiance from you to the world!
Rescue me thou, the only real!
And scare away this mad Ideal
That came, nor notions to depart!
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

Still he muses.

1.

What if the Three should catch at last
Thy serenader? While there's cast
Paul's cloak about my head, and fast
Gian pinions me, Himself has past
His stylet thro' my back; I reel;
And . . . is it Thou I feel?

2.

They trail me, these three godless
knaves,
Past every church that sains and saves,
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves
By Lido's wet accursed graves,
They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,
And . . . on Thy breast I sink!

She replies, musing.

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side,
elbow-deep,
As I do: thus: were Death so unlike
Sleep,
Caught this way? Death's to fear from
flame, or steel,
Or poison doubtless; but from water
—feel!

Go find the bottom! Would you stay
me? There!
Now pluck a great blade of that
ribbon-grass
To plait in where the foolish jewel was,
I flung away: since you have praised
my hair,
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

He speaks.

Row home? must we row home?

Too surely

Know I where its front's demurely
Over the Giudecca piled;
Window just with window mating,
Door on door exactly waiting,
All's the set face of a child:
But behind it, where's a trace
Of the staidness and reserve,
And formal lines without a curve,
In the same child's playing-face?
No two windows look one way
O'er the small sea-water thrall
Below them. Ah, the autumn day
I, passing, saw you overhead!
First, out a cloud of curtain blew,
Then, a sweet cry, and last, came you—
To catch your loory that must needs
Escape just then, of all times then,
To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,
And make me happiest of men.
I scarce could breathe to see you reach
So far back o'er the balcony,
(To catch him ere he climbed too high
Above you in the Smyrna peach)
That quick the round smooth cord of
gold,

This coiled hair on your head, un-
rolled,
Fell down you like a gorgeous snake
The Roman girls were wont, of old,
When Rome there was, for coolness'
sake

To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.
Dear loory, may his beak retain
Ever its delicate rose stain
As if the wounded lotus-blossoms
Had marked their thief to know again!
Stay longer yet, for others' sake
Than mine! what should your cham-
ber do?

—With all its rarities that ache
In silence while day lasts, but wake
At night-time and their life renew,
Suspended just to pleasure you
—That brought against their will to-
gether
These objects, and, while day lasts,
weave

Around them such a magic tether
That they look dumb: your harp,
believe,

With all the sensitive tight strings
That dare not speak, now to itself
Breathes slumbrously as if some elf
Went in and out the chords, his wings
Make murmur wheresoe'er they graze,
As an angel may, between the maze
Of midnight palace-pillars, on
And on, to sow God's plagues have
gone

Through guilty glorious Babylon.
And while such murmurs flow, the
nymph

Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell,
As the dry limpet for the lymph
Come with a tune he knows so well.
And how your statues' hearts must
swell!

And how your pictures must descend
To see each other, friend with friend!
Oh, could you take them by surprise,
You'd find Schidone's eager Duke
Doing the quaintest courtesies
To that prim Saint by Haste-thee-
Luke:

And, deeper into her rock den,
Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen
You'd find retreated from the ken
Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—
As if the Tizian thinks of her,
And is not, rather, gravely bent
On seeing for himself what toys
Are these, his progeny invent,
What litter now the board employs
Whereon he signed a document
That got him murdered! Each en-
joys

Its night so well, you cannot break
The sport up, so, indeed must make
More stay with me, for others' sake.

She speaks.

I.

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say,
Is used to tie the jasmine back
That overfloods my room with sweets,
Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets
My Zanze: if the ribbon's black,
The Three are watching; keep away.

2.

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreath
A mesh of water-weeds about
Its prow, as if he unaware
Had struck some quay or bridge-foot
stair :

That I may throw a paper out
As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper ; safe
are we !

Only one minute more to-night with
me ?

Resume your past self of a month
ago !

Be you the bashful gallant, I will be
The lady with the colder breast than
snow :

Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch
my hand

More than I touch yours when I step
to land,

! And say, All thanks, Siora !—

Heart to heart,
And lips to lips ! Yet once more, ere
we part,

Clasp me, and make me thine, as
mine thou art !

He is surprised, and stabbed.

It was ordained to be so, Sweet,—
and best

Comes now, beneath thine eyes, and
on thy breast.

Still kiss me ! Care not for the
cowards ! Care

Only to put aside thy beauteous
hair

My blood will hurt ! The Three, I
do not scorn

To death, because they never lived :
but I

Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one
more kiss)—can die !

ARTEMIS PROLOGUIZES

<p> I AM a Goddess of the ambrosial courts, And save by Here, Queen of Pride, surpassed By none whose temples whiten this the world. Thro' Heaven I roll my lucid moon along ; I shed in Hell o'er my pale people peace ; On Earth, I, caring for the creatures, guard Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox- bitch sleek, And every feathered mother's callow brood, And all that love green haunts and loneliness. Of men, the chaste adore me, hanging crowns Of poppies red to blackness, bell and stem, Upon my image at Athenai here ; And this dead Youth, Asclepius bends above, Was dearest to me. He my buskined step To follow thro' the wild-wood leafy ways, And chase the panting stag, or swift with darts Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leo- pard low. Neglected homage to another God : Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight smoke Of tapers lulled, in jealousy dispatched A noisome lust that, as the gadbee stings, Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for himself </p>	<p> The son of Theseus her great absent spouse. Hippolotos exclaiming in his rage Against the miserable Queen, she judged Lite insupportable, and, pricked at heart An Amazonian stranger's race should dare To scorn her, perished by the mur- derous cord : Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a scroll The fame of him her swerving made not swerve, Which Theseus read, returning, and believed, So, exiled in the blindness of his wrath, The man without a crime, who, last as first, Loyal, divulged not to his sire the truth. Now Theseus from Poseidon had ob- tained That of his wishes should be granted Three, And this he imprecated straight—alive May ne'er Hippolotos reach other lands ! Poseidon heard, ai, ai ! And scarce the prince Had stepped into the fixed boots of the car, That give the feet a stay against the strength Of the Henetian horses, and around His body flung the reins, and urged their speed Along the rocks and shingles of the shore, </p>
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When from the gaping wave a monster flung
 His obscene body in the coursers' path!
 These, mad with terror as the sea-bull sprawled
 Wallowing about their feet, lost care of him
 That reared them; and the master-chariot-pole
 Snapping beneath their plunges like a reed,
 Hippolotos, whose feet were trammelled fast,
 Was yet dragged forward by the circling rein
 Which either hand directed; nor was quenched
 The frenzy of that flight before each trace,
 Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woe-ful car,
 Each boulder-stone, sharp stub, and spiny shell,
 Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed amid the sands
 On that detested beach, was bright with blood
 And morsels of his flesh: then fell the steeds
 Head-foremost, crashing in their mooned fronts,
 Shivering with sweat, each white eye horror-fixed.
 His people who had witnessed all afar,
 Bore back the ruins of Hippolotos.
 But when his sire, too swoln with pride, rejoiced,
 (Indomitable as a man foredoomed)
 That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his prayer,
 I, in a flood of glory visible,
 Stood o'er my dying votary, and deed
 By deed revealed, as all took place, the truth.
 Then Theseus lay the woefullest of men,
 And worthily; but ere the death-veils hid
 His face, the murdered prince full pardon breathed
 To his rash sire. Whereat Athenai wails.
 So I, who ne'er forsake my votaries,
 Lest in the cross-way none the honey-cake
 Should tender, nor pour out the dog's hot life;
 Lest at my fane the priests disconsolate
 Should dress my image with some faded poor
 Few crowns, made favours of, nor dare object
 Such slackness to my worshippers who turn
 The trusting heart and loaded hand elsewhere,
 As they had climbed Oulumpus to report
 Of Artemis and nowhere found her throne—
 I interposed: and, this eventful night,
 While round the funeral pyre the populace
 Stood with fierce light on their black robes that blind
 Each sobbing head, while yet their hair they clipped
 O'er the dead body of their withered prince,
 And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated
 On the cold hearth, his brow cold as the slab
 'Twas bruised on, groaned away the heavy grief—
 As the pyre fell, and down the cross logs crashed,
 Sending a crowd of sparkles thro' the night,
 And the gay fire, elate with mastery,
 Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted jars
 Of wine, dissolving oils and frankincense,
 And splendid gums, like gold,—my potency
 Conveyed the perished man to my retreat
 In the thrice venerable forest here.
 And this white-bearded Sage who squeezes now

334 DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS

<p>The berried plant, is Phoibos' son of fame, Asclepios, whom my radiant brother taught The doctrine of each herb and flower and root, To know their secret'st virtue and express The saving soul of all—who so has soothed With lavers the torn brow and mur- dered cheeks, Composed the hair and brought its gloss again, And called the red bloom to the pale skin back, And laid the strips and jagged ends of flesh Even once more, and slacked the sinew's knot</p>	<p>Of every tortured limb—that now he lies As if mere sleep possessed him under- neath These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh, cheer, Divine presenter of the healing rod Thy snake, with ardent throat and lulling eye, Twines his lithe spires around! I say, much cheer! Proceed thou with thy wisest phar- macies! And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-nymphs, Ply, as the Sage directs, these buds and leaves That strew the turf around the Twain! While I Await, in fitting silence, the event.</p>
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WARING

I.

WHAT'S become of Waring
 Since he gave us all the slip,
 Chose land-travel or seafaring,
 Boots and chest, or staff and scrip,
 Rather than pace up and down
 Any longer London-town?

II.

Who'd have guessed it from his lip,
 Or his brow's accustomed bearing,
 On the night he thus took ship,
 Or started landward? — little caring
 For us, it seems, who supped together,
 (Friends of his too, I remember)
 And walked home thro' the merry
 weather,

The snowiest in all December;
 I left his arm that night myself
 For what's-his-name's, the new prose-
 poet,
 That wrote the book there, on the
 shelf—

How, forsooth, was I to know it
 If Waring meant to glide away
 Like a ghost at break of day?
 Never looked he half so gay!

III.

He was prouder than the Devil:
 How he must have cursed our revel!
 Ay, and many other meetings,
 Indoor visits, outdoor greetings.
 As up and down he paced this London,
 With no work done, but great works
 undone,
 Where scarce twenty knew his name.
 Why not, then, have earlier spoken,

Written, bustled? Who's to blame
 If your silence kept unbroken?
 "True, but there were sundry jottings,
 "Stray-leaves, fragments, blurs and
 blottings,
 "Certain first steps were achieved
 "Already which" — (is that your
 meaning?)
 "Had well borne out whoe'er believed
 "In more to come!" But who goes
 gleaning

Hedge-side chance-blades, while full-
 sheaved
 Stand cornfields by him? Pride,
 o'erweening
 Pride alone, puts forth such claims
 O'er the day's distinguished names.

IV.

Meantime, how much I loved him,
 I find out now I've lost him:
 I, who cared not if I moved him,
 Who could so carelessly accost him.
 Henceforth never shall get free
 Of his ghostly company,
 His eyes that just a little wink
 As deep I go into the merit
 Of this and that distinguished spirit—
 His cheeks' raised colour, soon to sink,
 As long I dwell on some stupendous
 And tremendous (Heaven defend us!)
 Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous
 Demoniac-seraphic
 Penman's latest piece of graphic.
 Nay, my very wrist grows warm
 With his dragging weight of arm!
 E'en so, swimmingly appears,
 Thro' one's after-supper musings,
 Some lost Lady of old years,
 With her beauteous vain endeavour,
 And goodness unrepaid as ever;

The face, accustomed to refusings,
We, puppies that we were. . . .

Oh never

Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled
Being aught like false, forsooth, to?
Telling aught but honest truth to?
What a sin, had we centupled
Its possessor's grace and sweetness!
No! she heard in its completeness
Truth, for truth's a weighty matter,
And, truth at issue, we can't flatter!
Well, 'tis done with: she's exempt
From damning us thro' such a sally;
And so she glides, as down a valley,
Taking up with her contempt,
Past our reach; and in, the flowers
Shut her unregarded hours.

v.

Oh, could I have him back once more.
This Waring, but one half-day more!
Back, with the quiet face of yore,
So hungry for acknowledgment
Like mine! I'd fool him to his bent!
Feed, should not he, to heart's
content?

I'd say, "to only have conceived
"Your great works, tho' they ne'er
make progress,
"Surpasses all we've yet achieved!"
I'd lie so, I should be believed.
I'd make such havoc of the claims
Of the day's distinguished names
To feast him with, as feasts an ogress
Her sharp-toothed golden-crowned
child!

Or, as one feasts a creature rarely
Captured here, unreconciled
To capture; and completely gives
Its pettish humours licence, barely
Requiring that it lives.

vi.

Ichabod, Ichabod,
The glory is departed!
Travels Waring East away?
Who, of knowledge, by hearsay,
Reports a man upstart
Somewhere as a God,
Hordes grown European-hearted,

Millions of the wild made tame
On a sudden at his fame?
In Vishnu-land what Avatar?
Or who, in Moscow, toward the Czar,
With the demurest of footfalls
Over the Kremlin's pavement, bright
With serpentine and syenite,
Steps, with five other Generals,
That simultaneously take snuff,
For each to have pretext enough
To kerchiefwise unfurl his sash
Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff
To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,
And leave the grand white neck no
gash?

Waring, in Moscow, to those rough
Cold northern natures borne, perhaps,
Like the lambwhite maiden dear
From the circle of mute kings,
Unable to repress the tear,
Each as his sceptre down he flings,
To Dian's fane at Taurica,
Where now a captive priestess, she
always

Mingles her tender grave Hellenic
speech

With theirs, tuned to the hailstone-
beaten beach,

As pours some pigeon, from the
myrrhy lands

Rapt by the whirlblast to fierce
Scythian strands

Where breed the swallows, her melo-
dious cry

Amid their barbarous twitter!

In Russia? Never! Spain were fitter!
Ay, most likely 'tis in Spain

That we and Waring meet again—
Now, while he turns down that cool
narrow lane

Into the blackness, out of grave Madrid
All fire and shine—abrupt as when
there's slid

Its stiff gold blazing pall
From some black coffin-lid.

Or, best of all,
I love to think

The leaving us was just a feint;
Back here to London did he slink;
And now works on without a wink
Of sleep, and we are on the brink
Of something great in fresco-paint:

Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor,
Up and down and o'er and o'er
He splashes, as none splashed before
Since great Caldara Polidore :
Or Music means this land of ours
Some favour yet, to pity won
By Purcell from his Rosy Bowers,—
"Give me my so long promised son,
"Let Waring end what I began!"
Then down he creeps and out he steals
Only when the night conceals
His face—in Kent 'tis cherry-time,
Or, hops are picking; or, at prime
Of March, he wanders as, too happy,
Years ago when he was young,
Some mild eve when woods grew
sappy,

And the early moths had sprung
To life from many a trembling sheath
Woven the warm boughs beneath;
While small birds said to themselves
What should soon be actual song,
And young gnats, by tens and twelves,
Made as if they were the throng
That crowd around and carry aloft
The sound they have nursed, so sweet
and pure,

Out of a myriad noises soft,
Into a tone that can endure
Amid the noise of a July noon,
When all God's creatures crave their
boon,

All at once and all in tune,
And get it, happy as Waring then,
Having first within his ken
What a man might do with men,
And far too glad, in the even-glow,
To mix with your world he meant to
take

Into his hand, he told you, so—
And out of it his world to make,
To contract and to expand
As he shut or oped his hand.
Oh, Waring, what's to really be?
A clear stage and a crowd to see!
Some Garrick—say—out shall not he
The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck?
Or, where most unclean beasts are rife,
Some Junius—am I right?—shall tuck
His sleeve, and out with flaying-knife!
Some Chatterton shall have the luck
Of calling Rowley into life!

Some one shall somehow run a muck
With this old world, for want of strife
Sound asleep: contrive, contrive
To rouse v, Waring! Who's alive?
Our men scarce seem in earnest now:
Distinguished names!—but 'tis, some-
how,

As if they played at being names
Still more distinguished, like the games
Of children. Turn our sport to earnest
With a visage of the sternest!
Bring the real times back, confessed
Still better than our very best!

II.

I.

"WHEN I last saw Waring . . ."
(How all turned to him who spoke
You saw Waring? Truth or joke?
In land-travel, or sea-faring?)

II.

"We were sailing by Triest,
"Where a day or two we harboured:
"A sunset was in the West,
"When, looking over the vessel's side,
"One of our company espied
"A sudden speck to larboard.
"And, as a sea-duck flies and swims
"At once, so came the light craft up,
"With its sole lateen sail that trims
"And turns (the water round its rims
"Dancing, as round a sinking cup)
"And by us like a fish it curled,
"And drew itself up close beside,
"Its great sail on the instant furled.
"And o'er its planks, a shrill voice
cried,
"(A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's)
"Buy wine of us, you English Brig?
"Or fruit, tobacco and cigars?
"A Pilot for you to Triest?
"Without one, look you ne'er so l . . .
"They'll never let you up the bay!
"We natives should know best!
"I turned, and 'just those fellows'
way,
"Our captain said, 'The 'long-shore
thieves
"Are laughing at us in their sleeves."

III.

"In truth, the boy leaned laughing
 back ;
 "And one, half-hidden by his side
 "Under the furled sail, soon I spied,
 "With great grass hat, and kerchief
 black.
 "Who looked up, with his kingly
 throat.
 "Said somewhat, while the other
 shook
 "His hair back from his eyes to look
 "Their longest at us ; then the boat,
 "I know not how, turned sharply
 round,
 "Laying her whole side on the sea
 "As a leaping fish does ; from the
 lee

"Into the weather, cut somehow
 "Her sparkling path beneath our
 bow ;
 "And so went off, as with a bound,
 "Into the rose and golden half
 "Of the sky, to overtake the sun,
 "And reach the shore, like the sea-
 calf
 "Its singing cave ; yet I caught one
 "Glance ere away the boat quite
 passed,
 "And neither time nor toil could mar
 "Those features : so I saw the last
 "Of Waring !"—You ? Oh, never
 star
 Was lost here, but it rose afar !
 Look East, where whole new thou-
 sands are !
 In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?

RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI

I.

I KNOW a Mount, the gracious Sun
 perceives
 First when he visits, last, too, when
 he leaves
 The world ; and, vainly favoured, it
 repays
 The day-long glory of his steadfast
 gaze
 By no change of its large calm front
 of snow.
 And underneath the Mount, a Flower
 I know,
 He cannot have perceived, that changes
 ever
 At his approach ; and, in the lost en-
 deavour
 To live his life, has parted, one by one,
 With all a flower's true graces, for the
 grace
 Of being but a foolish mimic sun,
 With ray-like florets round a disk-like
 face.
 Men nobly call by many a name the
 Mount,
 As over many a land of theirs its large
 Calm front of snow like a triumphal
 targe
 Is reared, and still with old names,
 fresh ones vie,
 Each to its proper praise and own
 account :
 Men call the Flower, the Sunflower.
 sportively.

II.

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold
 look
 Across the waters to this twilight nook,
 ---The far sad waters, Angel, to this
 nook !

III.

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East
 indeed ?
 Go ! Saying ever as thou dost pro-
 ceed,
 That I, French Rudel, choose for my
 device
 A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice
 Before its idol. See ! These inexpert
 And hurried fingers could not fail to
 hurt
 The woven picture ; 'tis a woman's
 skill
 Indeed ; but nothing baffled me, so,
 ill
 Or well, the work is finished. Say
 men feed
 On songs I sing, and therefore bask
 the bees
 On my flower's breast as on a platform
 broad :
 But, as the flower's concern is not for
 these
 But solely for the sun, so men applaud
 In vain this Rudel, he not looking here
 But to the East-- the East ! Go, say
 this, Pilgrim dear !

CRISTINA

I.

SHE should never have looked at me,
 If she meant I should not love her !
 There are plenty . . . men, you call such,
 I suppose . . . she may discover
 All her soul to, if she pleases,
 And yet leave much as she found
 them :
 But I'm not so, and she knew it
 When she fixed me, glancing round
 them.

II.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
 But I can't tell . . . there's my
 weakness . . .
 What her look said!—no vile cant, sure,
 About "need to strew the bleakness"
 "Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
 "That the Sea feels"—no "strange
 yearning"
 "That such souls have, most to lavish
 "Where there's chance of least re-
 turning."

III.

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God
 knows !
 But not quite so sunk that moments,
 Sure tho' seldom, are denied us,
 When the spirit's true endowments
 Stand out plainly from its false ones,
 And apprise it if pursuing
 Or the right way or the wrong way,
 To its triumph or undoing.

IV.

There are flashes struck from mid-
 nights,
 There are fire-flames noondays
 kindle,
 Whereby piled-up honours perish,
 Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
 While just this or that poor impulse,
 Which for once had play unstifled,
 Seems the sole work of a life-time
 That away the rest have trifled.

V.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
 As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
 Ages past the soul existed,
 Here an age 'tis resting merely,
 And hence, fleets again for ages :
 While the true end, sole and single
 It stops here for is, this love-way,
 With some other soul to mingle ?

VI.

Else it loses what it lived for,
 And eternally must lose it ;
 Better ends may be in prospect,
 Deeper blisses, if you choose it,
 But this life's end and this love-
 bliss
 Have been lost here. Doubt you
 whether
 This she felt, as, looking at me,
 Mine and her souls rushed together?

VII.

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
 The world's honours, in derision,
 Trampled out the light for ever :
 Never fear but there's provision
 Of the Devil's to quench knowledge
 Lest we walk the earth in rapture !
 —Making those who catch God's secret
 Just so much more prize their cap-
 ture.

VIII.

Such am I : the secret's mine now !
 She has lost me—I have gained
 her !
 Her soul's mine : and, thus, grown
 perfect,
 I shall pass my life's remainder,
 Life will just hold out the proving
 Both our powers, alone and
 blended—
 And then, come the next life quickly !
 This world's use will have been
 ended.

MADHOUSE CELL

I

JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION

THERE'S Heaven above, and night
 by night,
 I look right through its gorgeous
 roof;
 No sun and moons though e'er so
 bright
 Avail to stop me; splendour-proof
 I keep the broods of stars aloof:
 For I intend to get to God,
 For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
 For in God's breast, my own abode,
 Those shoals of dazzling glory past,
 I lay my spirit down at last.
 I lie where I have always lain,
 God smiles as He has always smiled;
 Ere suns and moons could wax and
 wane,
 Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
 The Heavens, God thought on me
 His child;
 Ordained a life for me, arrayed
 Its circumstances, every one
 To the minutest; ay, God said
 This head this hand should rest upon
 Thus, ere He fashioned star or sun.
 And having thus created me,
 Thus rooted me, He bade me grow,
 Guiltless for ever, like a tree
 That buds and blooms, nor seeks
 to know
 The law by which it prospers so:
 But sure that thought and word and
 deed
 All go to swell His love for me,
 Me, made because that love had need
 Of something irrevocably
 Pledged solely its content to be.

Yes, yes, a tree which must ascend,—
 No poison-gourd foredoomed to
 stoop!
 I have God's warrant, could I blend
 All hideous sins, as in a cup,
 To drink the mingled venoms up,
 Secure my nature will convert
 The draught to blossoming gladness
 fast,
 While sweet dew turns to the gourd's
 hurt,
 And bloat, and while they bloat it,
 bloat,
 As from the first its lot was cast.
 For as I lie, smiled on, full fed
 By unexhausted power to bless,
 I gaze below on Hell's fierce bed,
 And those its waves of flame op-
 press,
 Swarming in ghastly wretchedness;
 Whose life on earth aspired to be
 One altar-smoke, so pure!—to win
 If not love like God's love to me,
 At least to keep His anger in,
 And all their striving turned to sin!
 Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown
 white
 With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
 The martyr, the wan acolyte,
 The incense-swinging child,—undone
 Before God fashioned star or sun!
 God, whom I praise; how could I
 praise,
 If such as I might understand,
 Make out, and reckon on, His ways,
 And bargain for His love, and stand,
 Paying a price, at His right hand?

II

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

THE rain set early in to-night,
 The sullen wind was soon awake,
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
 And did its worst to vex the lake,
 I listened with heart fit to break ;
 When glided in Porphyria : straight
 She shut the cold out and the storm,
 And kneeled and made the cheerless
 grate
 Blaze up, and all the cottage warm ;
 Which done, she rose, and from her
 form
 Withdrew the dripping cloak and
 shawl,
 And laid her soiled gloves by, un-
 tied
 Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
 And, last, she sate down by my side
 And called me. When no voice re-
 plied,
 She put my arm about her waist,
 And made her smooth white shoul-
 der bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie
 there,
 And spread o'er all her yellow hair,
 Murmuring how she loved me ; she
 Too weak, for all her heart's en-
 deavour,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, and vainer ties dis sever,
 And give herself to me for ever :
 But passion sometimes would prevail.
 Nor could to-night's gay feast re-
 strain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain ;
 So, she was come through wind and
 rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes
 Proud, very proud ; at last I knew
 Porphyria worshipped me ; surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it
 grew
 While I debated what to do.
 That moment she was mine, mine,
 fair,
 Perfectly pure and good : I found
 A thing to do, and all her hair
 In one long yellow string I wound
 Three times her little throat around,
 And strangled her. No pain felt
 she ;
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.
 As a shut bud that holds a bee
 I warily oped her lids ; again
 Laughed the blue eyes without a
 stain.
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck ; her cheek once
 more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning
 kiss :
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time *my* shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it
 still :
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead !
 Porphyria's love : she guessed not
 how
 Her darling one wish would be
 heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not
 stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word !

THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR

1842

I.

As I ride, as I ride,
With a full heart for my guide,
So its tide rocks my side,
As I ride, as I ride,
That, as I were double-eyed,
He, in whom our Tribes confide,
Is desried, ways untried
As I ride, as I ride.

II.

As I ride, as I ride
To our Chief and his Allied,
Who dares chide my heart's pride
As I ride, as I ride?
Or are witnesses denied—
Through the desert waste and wide
Do I glide unespied
As I ride, as I ride?

III.

As I ride, as I ride,
When an inner voice has cried.
The sands slide, nor abide
(As I ride, as I ride)

O'er each visioned Homicide
That came vaunting (has he lied?)
To reside—where he died,
As I ride, as I ride.

IV.

As I ride, as I ride,
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,
As I ride, as I ride,
Shows where sweat has sprung and
dried,
—Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed—
How has vied stride with stride
As I ride, as I ride!

V.

As I ride, as I ride,
Could I loose what Fate has tied,
Ere I pried, she should hide
As I ride, as I ride,
All that's meant me : satisfied
When the Prophet and the Bride
Stop veins I'd have subside
As I ride, as I ride!

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A CHILD'S STORY

(WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, W. M. THE YOUNGER)

I.

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city ;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern
side ;
A pleasanter spot you never spied ;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II.

Rats !
They fought the dogs, and killed the
cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats.
And licked the soup from the cook's
own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday
hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking ;
" 'Tis clear," cried they, " our Mayor's
a noddy ;
" And as for our Corporation—
shocking

" To think we buy gowns lined with
ermine
" For dolts that can't or won't de-
termine
" What's best to rid us of our vermin !
" You hope, because you're old and
obese,
" To find in the furry civic robe ease ?
" Rouse up, Sirs ! Give your brains
a racking
" To find the remedy we're lacking,
" Or, sure as fate, we'll send you
packing !"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sate in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence :
" For a guilder I'd my ermine gown
sell ;
" I wish I were a mile hence !
" It's easy to bid one rack one's
brain—
" I'm sure my poor head aches again
" I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
" Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap !"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap ?
" Bless us," cried the Mayor, " what's
that ?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat ;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,

Save when at noon his paunch grew
mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutin-
ous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
"Anything like the sound of a rat
"Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V.

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, look-
ing bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and
kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grand-
sire,
"Starting up at the Trump of Doom's
tone,
"Had walked this way from his
painted tombstone!"

VI.

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honours," said he,
"I'm able,
"By means of a secret charm, to draw
"All creatures living beneath the sun,
"That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
"After me so as you never saw!
"And I chiefly use my charm
"On creatures that do people harm,
"The mole, and toad, and newt, and
viper;
"And people call me the Pied Piper."
And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-
same cheque;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe:
And his fingers, they noticed, were
ever straying
As if impatient to be playing

Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
(Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
"In Tartary I freed the Cham,
"Last June, from his huge swarms of
gnats;
"I eased in Asia the Nizam
"Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-
bats:
"And, as for what your brain be-
wilders,
"If I can rid your town of rats
"Will you give me a thousand
guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the
exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corpora-
tion.

VII.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes
twinkled
Like a candle flame where salt is
sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe
uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grum-
bling:
And the grumbling grew to a mighty
rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came
tumbling,
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny
rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny
rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advanc-
ing,
And step for step they followed dancing,

Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, "At the first shrill notes
of the pipe,

"I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
"And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
"Into a cider-press's gripe:

"And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,

"And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,

"And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,

"And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:

"And it seemed as if a voice

"Sweeter far than by harp or by psalmery

"Breathed) called out, Oh rats, retire!

"The world is grown to one vast prey!

"So, on, crunch on, take your share!

"St. supper, dinner, luncheon!

"And as a bulky sugar-puncheon,

"All day stared, like a great sun-stone!

"Nor scarce an inch before me,
Just methought it said, Come,

"Be he!
—I for the rolling o'er me."

III.

You should have heard the Hamelin people

Ring the bells till they rocked the steeple;

"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!

"Poke out the nests and block up the holes!

"Consult with carpenters and builders,

"And leave in our town not even a trace

"Of the rats!"—when suddenly up the face

Of the Piper perked in the market-place,

With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX.

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;

So did the Corporation too.

For council dinners made rare havock
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave,

Hock;

And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.

To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!

"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,

"Our business was done at the river's brink;

"We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,

"And what's dead can't come to life, I think.

"So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink

"From the duty of giving you something for drink,

"And a matter of money to put in your poke;

"But, as for the guilders, what we spoke

"Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.

"Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;

"A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X.

The piper's face fell, and he cried,

"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!

"I've promised to visit by dinner time

"Bagdat, and accept the prime

"Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,

"For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,

"Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—

"With him I proved no bargain-driver,

"With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver !
 "And folks who put me in a passion
 "May find me pipe to another fashion."

XI.

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
 "Being worse treated than a Cook ?
 "Insulted by a lazy ribald
 "With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?
 "You threaten us, fellow ! Do your worst,
 "Blow your pipe there till you burst !"

XII.

Once more he stept into the street ;
 And to his lips again
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;
 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
 Never gave the enraptured air)
 There was a rustling, that seemed like
 a bustling
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching
 and hustling,
 Small feet were pattering, wooden
 shoes clattering,
 Little hands clapping, and little tongues
 chattering,
 And, like fowls in a farm-yard when
 barley is scattering,
 Out came the children running,
 All the little boys and girls,
 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
 And sparkling eyes and teeth like
 pearls,
 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily
 after
 The wonderful music with shouting
 and laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council
 stood
 As if they were changed into blocks
 of wood,

Unable to move a step, or cry
 To the children merrily skipping by—
 And could only follow with the eye
 That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
 But how the Mayor was on the rack,
 And the wretched Council's bosoms
 beat,

As the Piper turned from the High
 Street

To where the Weser rolled its waters
 Right in the way of their sons and
 daughters !

However he turned from South to
 West,

And to Koppelberg Hill his steps
 addressed,

And after him the children pressed ;
 Great was the joy in every breast.

"He never can cross that mighty top !

"He's forced to let the piping drop,

"And we shall see our children stop !"
 When, lo, as they reached the moun-
 tain's side,

A wondrous portal opened wide,

As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;

And the Piper advanced and the chil-
 dren followed,

And when all were in to the very last,
 The door in the mountain side shut
 fast.

Did I say, all? No ! One was lame,
 And could not dance the whole of the
 way ;

And in after years, if you would blame
 His sadness, he was used to say,—

"It's dull in our town since my play-
 mates left !

"I can't forget that I'm bereft

"Of all the pleasant sights they see,

"Which the Piper also promised me ;

"For he led us, he said, to a joyous
 land,

"Joining the town and just at hand,

"Where waters gushed and fruit-trees
 grew,

"And flowers put forth a fairer hue,

"And everything was strange and
 new ;

"The sparrows were brighter than
 peacocks here,

"And their dogs outran our fallow
 deer,

348 DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS

"And honey-bees had lost their stings,
 "And horses were born with eagles'
 wings ;
 "And just as I became assured
 "My lame foot would be speedily
 cured,
 "The music stopped and I stood still,
 "And found myself outside the Hill,
 "Left alone against my will,
 "To go now limping as before,
 "And never hear of that country
 more !"

XIV.

Alas, alas for Hamelin !
 There came into many a burgher's
 pate
 A text which says, that Heaven's
 Gate
 Opens to the Rich at as easy rate
 As the needle's eye takes a camel in !
 The Mayor sent East, West, North,
 and South
 To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
 Wherever it was men's lot to find
 him,
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,
 If he'd only return the way he went.
 And bring the children behind him.
 But when they saw 'twas a lost endea-
 vour,
 And Piper and dancers were gone for
 ever,
 They made a decree that lawyers
 never
 Should think their records dated
 duly
 If, after the day of the month and
 year,
 These words did not as well appear.
 "And so long after what happened
 here
 " On the Twenty-second of July,
 "Thirteen hundred and Seventy-six : "
 And the better in memory to fix

The place of the Children's last
 retreat,
 They called it, the Pied Piper's
 Street --
 Where any one playing on pipe or
 tabor
 Was sure for the future to lose his
 labour.
 Nor suffered they Hostelry or Tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so
 solemn ;
 But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
 And on the Great Church Window
 painted
 The same, to make the world ac-
 quainted
 How their children were stolen away ;
 And there it stands to this very
 day.
 And I must not omit to say
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe
 Of alien people that ascribe
 The outlandish ways and dress
 On which their neighbours lay such
 stress,
 To their fathers and mothers having
 risen
 Out of some subterraneous prison
 Into which they were trepanned
 Long time ago in a mighty band
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick
 land,
 But how or why, they don't under-
 stand.

XV.

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
 Of scores out with all men—especi-
 ally pipers :
 And, whether they pipe us free, from
 rats or from mice,
 If we've promised them aught, let us
 keep our promise.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[16—]

I.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris,
and he ;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we gal-
loped all three ;
"Good speed !" cried the watch, as
the gate-bolts undrew ;
"Speed !" echoed the wall to us gal-
loping through ;
Behind shut the postern, the lights
sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped
abreast.

II.

Not a word to each other ; we kept
the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never
changing our place ;
I turned in my saddle and made its
girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set
the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chined
slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a
whit.

III.

'Twas moonset at starting ; but while
we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight
dawned clear ;
At Boom, a great yellow star came
out to see ;
At Duffeld, 'twas morning as plain as
could be ;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we
heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet
there is time !"

IV.

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden
the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black
every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping
past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland
at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting
away
The haze, as some bluff river head-
land its spray.

V.

And his low head and crest, just one
sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked
out on his track ;
And one eye's black intelligence, -
ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own
master, askance !
And the thick heavy spume-flakes
which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in
galloping on.

VI.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned ; and cried
Joris, "Stay spur !"
"Your Roos galloped bravely, the
fault's not in her,
"We'll remember at Aix"—for one
heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck
and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of
the flank,
As down on her haunches she shud-
dered and sank.

VII.

So we were left galloping, Joris
and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud
in the sky ;
The broad sun above laughed a piti-
less laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright
stubble like chaff ;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire
sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix
is in sight !"

VIII.

"How they'll greet us !"—and all in
a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead
as a stone ;
And there was my Roland to bear the
whole weight
Of the news which alone could save
Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood
to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-
sockets' rim.

IX.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each
holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go
belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted
his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my
horse without peer ;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang,
any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland gal-
loped and stood.

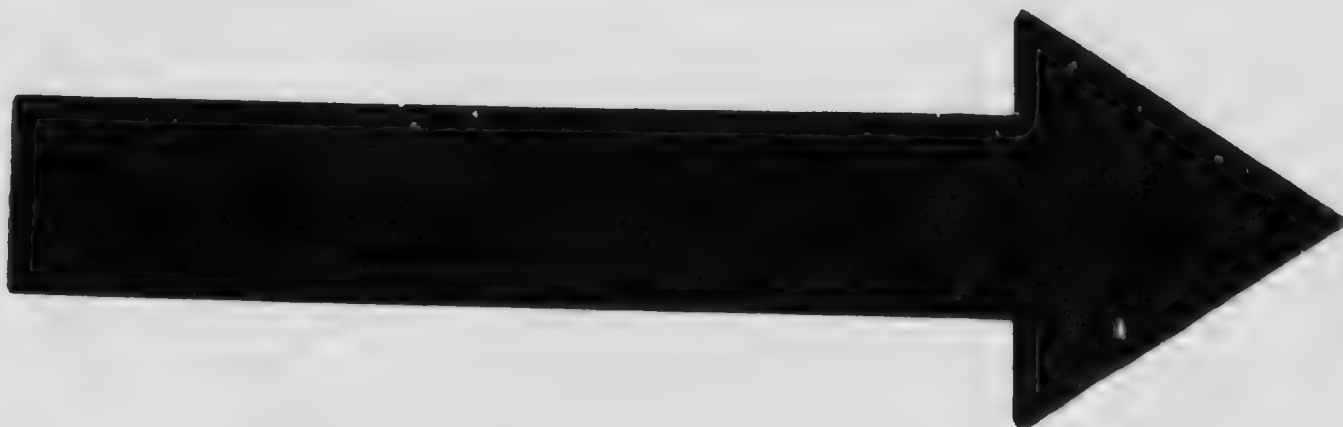
X.

And all I remember is, friends flock-
ing round
As I sate with his head 'twixt my
knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this
Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last
measure of wine.
Which (the burgesses voted by com-
mon consent)
Was no more than his due who
brought good news from Ghent.

PICTOR IGNOTUS

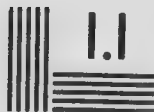
[FLORENCE, 15—]

<p>I COULD have painted pictures like that youth's Ye praise so. How my soul springs up! No bar Stayed me — ah, thought which saddens while it soothes! — Never did fate forbid me, star by star, To outburst on your night with all my gift Of fires from God: nor would my flesh have shrunk From seconding my soul, with eyes uplift And wide to Heaven, or, straight like thunder, sunk To the centre, of an instant; or around Turned calmly and inquisitive, to scan The license and the limit, space and bound, Allowed to Truth made visible in Man. And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw, Over the canvass could my hand have flung, Each face obedient to its passion's law, Each passion clear proclaimed with- out a tongue; Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood, A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace, Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place,</p>	<p>Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up, And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved, — O Human faces, hath it spilt, my cup? What did ye give me that I have not saved? Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well!) Of going — I, in each new picture, — forth, As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell, To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South or North, Bound for the calmly satisfied great State, Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went, Flowers cast upon the car which bore the freight, Through old streets named afresh from its event, Till it reached home, where learned Age should greet My face, and Youth, the star not yet distinct Above his hair, lie learning at my feet! — Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked With love about, and praise, till life should end, And then not go to Heaven, but linger here, Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend, — The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear!</p>
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But a voice changed it ! Glimpses of
 such sights
 I have scared me, like the revels
 thro' a door
 Of some strange House of Idols at its
 rites ;
 This world seemed not the world it
 was before !
 Mixed with my loving trusting ones
 there trooped
 . . . Who summoned those cold
 faces that begun
 To press on me and judge me ? Tho'
 I stooped
 Shrinking, as from the soldiery a
 nun,
 They drew me forth, and spite of me
 . . . enough !
 These buy and sell our pictures,
 take and give,
 Count them for garniture and house-
 hold stuff,
 And where they live our pictures
 needs must live,
 And see their faces, listen to their
 prate,
 Partakers of their daily pettiness,
 Discussed of,—“ This I love, or this I
 hate,
 “ This likes me more, and this
 affects me less ! ”

Wherefore I chose my portion. If at
 whiles
 My heart sinks, as monotonous I
 paint
 These endless cloisters and eternal
 aisles
 With the same series, Virgin, Babe,
 and Saint,
 With the same cold, calm, beautiful
 regard,
 At least no merchant traffics in my
 heart ;
 The sanctuary's gloom at least shall
 ward
 Vain tongues from where my pic-
 tures stand apart ;
 Only prayer breaks the silence of the
 shrine
 While, blackening in the daily
 candle-smoke,
 They moulder on the damp wall's
 travertine,
 ' Mid echoes the light footstep never
 woke.
 So die, my pictures ; surely, gently die !
 Oh, youth, men praise so,—holds
 their praise its worth ?
 Blown harshly, keeps the trump its
 golden cry ?
 Tastes sweet the water with such
 specks of earth ?

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds thro' the country-
side,

Breathed hot and instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have
plucked

The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping thro' the moss they
love.

—How long it seems since Charles
was lost!

Six days the soldiers crossed and
crossed

The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal-fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us, in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and loughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew; when these had
passed,

I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart

One instant, rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground:
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she
stripped

A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast:
Then I drew breath: they disap-
peared:

It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not
fail

Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and
stood,

Planting each naked foot so firm.
To crush the snake and spare the
worm—

At first sight of her eyes, I said,
“I am that man upon whose head
“They fix the price, because I hate
“The Austrians over us: the State
“Will give you gold—oh, gold so
much,

“If you betray me to their clutch!
“And be your death, for aught I know
“If once they find you saved their foe.
“Now, you must bring me food and
drink.

“And also paper, pen, and ink,
“And carry safe what I shall write
“To Padua, which you'll reach at night

"Before the Duomo shuts ; go in,
 "And wait till Tenebræ begin ;
 "Walk to the Third Confessional,
 "Between the pillar and the wall,
 "And kneeling whisper *whence comes*
peace ?
 "Say it a second time ; then cease ;
 "And if the voice inside returns,
 "From Christ and Freedom ; *what*
concerns
 "The cause of Peace ?—for answer, slip
 "My letter where you placed your lip ;
 "Then come back happy we have done
 "Our mother service—I, the son,
 "As you the daughter of our land ! "

Three mornings more, she took her
 stand
 In the same place, with the same eyes :
 I was no surer of sun-rise
 Than of her coming : we conferred
 Of her own prospects, and I heard
 She had a lover—stout and tall,
 She said—then let her eyelids fall,
 "He could do much"—as if some
 doubt
 Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
 "She could not speak for others—who
 "Had other thoughts ; herself she
 knew : "
 And so she brought me drink and food.
 After four days, the scouts pursued
 Another path : at last arrived
 The help my Paduan friends contrived
 To furnish me : she brought the news :
 For the first time I could not choose
 But kiss her hand and lay my own
 Upon her head—"This faith was
 shown
 "To Italy, our mother ;—she
 "Uses my hand and blesses thee ! "
 She followed down to the sea-shore ;
 I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
 Concerning—much less wished for—
 aught
 Beside the good of Italy
 For which I live and mean to die !
 I never was in love ; and since
 Charles proved false, nothing could
 convince

My inmost heart I had a friend ;
 However, if I pleased to spend
 Real wishes on myself—say, Three—
 I know at least what one should be :
 I would grasp Metternich until
 I felt his red wet throat distil
 In blood thro' these two hands : and
 next,
 —Nor much for that am I perplexed—
 Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
 Should die slow of a broken heart
 Under his new employers : last
 —Ah, there, what should I wish :
 For fast

Do I grow old and out of strength —
 If I resolved to seek at length
 My father's house again, how scared
 They all would look, and unprepared !
 My brothers live in Austria's pay
 —Disowned me long ago, men say ;
 And all my early mates who used
 To praise me so—perhaps induced
 More than one early step of mine
 Are turning wise ; while some opine
 "Freedom grows Licence," some
 suspect

"Haste breeds Delay," and recollect
 They always said, such premature
 Beginnings never could endure !
 So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
 The land seems settling to its rest.
 I think, then, I should wish to stand
 This evening in that dear, lost land,
 Over the sea the thousand miles,
 And know if yet that woman smiles
 With the calm smile ; some little farm
 She lives in there, no doubt ; what
 harm

If I sate on the door-side bench,
 And, while her spindle made a trench
 Fantastically in the dust,
 Inquired of all her fortunes—just
 Her children's ages and their names,
 And what may be the husband's aims
 For each of them—I'd talk this out,
 And sit there, for an hour about,
 Then kiss her hand once more, and
 lay

Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
 It steals the time ! To business now !

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY

[PIANO DI SORRENTO]

FORTÙ, Fortù, my beloved one,
Sit here by my side,
On my knees put up both little feet !
I was sure, if I tried,
I could make you laugh spite of
Scirocco :

Now, open your eyes—
Let me keep you amused till he vanish
In black from the skies,
With telling my memories over
As you tell your beads ;
All the memories plucked at Sorrento
—The flowers, or the weeds.

Time for rain ! for your long hot dry
Autumn

Had net-worked with brown
The white skin of each grape on the
bunches,

Marked like a quail's crown,
Those creatures you make such ac-
count of,

Whose heads,—specked with white
Over brown like a great spider's back,
As I told you last night, -

Your mother bites off for her supper ;
Red-ripe as could be,

Pomegranates were chapping and
splitting

In halves on the tree :
And betwixt the loose walls of great
flintstone,

Or in the thick dust
On the path, or straight out of the
rock side,

Wherever could thrust
Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-
flower

Its yellow face up,

For the prize were great butterflies
fighting,
Some five for one cup.

So, I guessed, ere I got up this morn-
ing,

What change was in store,
By the quick rustle-down of the quail-
nets

Which woke me before
I could open my shutter, made fast

With a bough and a stone,
And look thro' the twisted dead vine-
twigs,

Sole lattice that's known !
Quick and sharp rang the rings down
the net-poles,

While, busy beneath,
Your priest and his brother tugged at
them,

The rain in their teeth :
And out upon all the flat house-roofs
Where split figs lay drying,

The girls took the frails under cover :
Nor use seemed in trying

To get out the boats and go fishing,
For, under the cliff,

Fierce the black water frothed o'er the
blind-rock.

No seeing our skiff
Arrive about noon from Amalfi,

— Our fisher arrive,
And pitch down his basket before us,
All trembling alive

With pink and grey jellies, your sea-
fruit,

— You touch the strange lumps,
And mouths gape there, eyes open,
all manner

Of horns and of humps,

Which only the fisher looks grave at,
 While round him like imps,
 Cling screaming the children as naked
 And brown as his shrimps ;
 Himself too as bare to the middle—
 You see round his neck
 The string and its brass coin suspended,
 That saves him from wreck.
 But to-day not a boat reached Salerno,
 So back to a man
 Came our friends, with whose help in
 the vineyards
 Grape-harvest began :
 In the vat, half-way up in our house-
 side,
 Like blood the juice spins,
 While your brother all bare-legged is
 dancing
 Till breathless he grins
 Dead-beaten, in effort on effort
 To keep the grapes under,
 Since still when he seems all but
 master,
 In pours the fresh plunder
 From girls who keep coming and
 going
 With basket on shoulder,
 And eyes shut against the rain's
 driving,
 Your girls that are older,—
 For under the hedges of aloe,
 And where, on its bed
 Of the orchard's black mould, the
 love-apple
 Lies pulpy and red,
 All the young ones are kneeling and
 filling
 Their laps with the snails
 Tempted out by this first rainy
 weather,—
 Your best of regales,
 As to-night will be proved to my
 sorrow,
 When, supping in state,
 We shall feast our grape-gleaners (two
 dozen,
 Three over one plate)
 With lasagne so tempting to swallow
 In slippery ropes,
 And gourds fried in great purple slices,
 That colour of popes.

Meantime, see the grape-bunch they've
 brought you,—
 The rain-water slips
 O'er the heavy blue bloom on each
 globe
 Which the wasp to your lips
 Still follows with fretful persistence—
 Nay, taste, while awake,
 This half of a curd-white smooth
 cheese-ball,
 That peels, flake by flake,
 Like an onion's, each smoother and
 whiter.
 Next, sip this weak wine
 From the thin green glass flask, with
 its stopper,
 A leaf of the vine,—
 And end with the prickly-pear's red
 flesh
 That leaves thro' its juice
 The stony black seeds on your pearl-
 teeth
 . . . Scirocco is loose !
 Hark ! the quick, whistling pelt of the
 olives
 Which, thick in one's track,
 Tempt the stranger to pick up and
 bite them,
 Tho' not yet half black !
 How the old twisted olive trunks
 shudder !
 The medlars let fall
 Their hard fruit, and the brittle great
 fig-trees
 Snap off, figs and all, --
 For here comes the whole of the
 tempest !
 No refuge, but creep
 Back again to my side and my
 shoulder,
 And listen or sleep.
 O how will your country show next
 week,
 When all the vine-boughs
 Have been stripped of their foliage to
 pasture
 The mules and the cows ?
 Last eve, I rode over the mountains ;
 Your brother, my guide,
 Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles
 That offered, each side,

Their fruit-balls, black, glossy and
 luscious,—
 Or strip from the sorbs
 A treasure, so rosy and wondrous,
 Of hairy gold orbs !
 But my mule picked his sure, sober
 path out,
 Just stopping to neigh
 When he recognised down in the valley
 His mates on their way
 With the faggots, and barrels of water ;
 And soon we emerged
 From the plain, where the woods
 could scarce follow :
 And still as we urged
 Our way, the woods wondered, and
 left us,
 As up still we trudged
 Though the wild path grew wilder
 each instant,
 And place was e'en grudged
 'Mid the rock-chasins, and piles of
 loose stones
 (Like the loose broken teeth
 Of some monster, which climbed there
 to die
 From the ocean beneath)
 Place was grudged to the silver-grey
 fume-weed
 That clung to the path,
 And dark rosemary, ever a-dying,
 That, 'spite the wind's wrath,
 So loves the salt rock's face to sea-
 ward,—
 And lentisks as staunch
 To the stone where they root and bear
 berries,—
 And . . . what shows a branch
 Coral-coloured, transparent, with cir-
 clets
 Of pale seagreen leaves—
 Over all trod my mule with the caution
 Of gleaners o'er sheaves,
 Still, foot after foot like a lady
 So, round after round,
 He climbed to the top of Calvano,
 And God's own profound
 Was above me, and round me the
 mountains,
 And under, the sea,
 And within me, my heart to bear witness
 What was and shall be !

Oh heaven, and the terrible crystal !
 No rampart excludes
 Your eye from the life to be lived
 In the blue solitudes !
 Oh, those mountains, their infinite
 movement !
 Still moving with you—
 For, ever some new head and breast
 of them
 Thrusts into view
 To observe the intruder—you see it
 If quickly you turn
 And, before they escape you, surprise
 them—
 They grudge you should learn
 How the soft plains they look on,
 lean over,
 And love (they pretend)
 Cower beneath them : the flat sea-
 pine crouches,
 The wild fruit-trees bend,
 E'en the myrtle-leaves curl, shrink
 and shut—
 All is silent and grave—
 'Tis a sensual and timorous beauty—
 How fair, but a slave !
 So, I turned to the sea,—and there
 slumbered
 As greenly as ever
 Those isles of the siren, your Galli ;
 No ages can sever,
 The Three, nor enable their sister
 To join them,—half-way
 On the voyage, she looked at
 Ulysses—
 No farther to-day ;
 Tho' the small one, just launched in
 the wave,
 Watches breast-high and steady
 From under the rock, her bold
 sister
 Swum half-way already.
 Forth, shall we sail there together
 And see from the sides
 Quite new rocks show their faces
 new haunts
 Where the siren abides ?
 Shall we sail round and round them,
 close over
 The rocks, tho' unseen,
 That ruffle the grey glassy water
 To glorious green ?

Then scramble from splinter to
splinter,
Reach land and explore,
On the largest, the strange square
black turret
With never a door,
Just a loop to admit the quick lizards ;
Then, stand there and hear
The birds' quiet singing, that tells us
What life is, so clear !
The secret they sang to Ulysses,
When, ages ago,
He heard and he knew this life's
secret,
I hear and I know !

Ah, see ! The sun breaks o'er Cal-
vano—

He strikes the great gloom
And flutters it o'er the mount's
summit

In airy gold fume !

All is over ! Look out, see the gypsy,
Our tinker and smith,

Has arrived, set up bellows and forge,
And down-squatted forthwith
To his hammering, under the wall
there ;

One eye keeps aloof
The urchins that itch to be putting

His jews'-harps to proof,
While the other, thro' locks of
curled wire,

Is watching how sleek
Shines the hog, come to share in the
windfalls

—An abbot's own cheek !

All is over ! Wake up and come out
now,

And down let us go,
And see the fine things got in order
At Church for the show

Of the Sacrament, set forth this even-
ing ;

To-morrow's the Feast
Of the Rosary's Virgin, by no means
Of Virgins the least—

As you'll hear in the off-hand dis-
course

Which (all nature, no art)

The Dominican brother, these three
weeks,

Was getting by heart.

Not a post nor a pillar but's dizen'd

With red and blue papers ;

All the roof waves with ribbons, each
altar

A-blaze with long tapers ;

But the great masterpiece is the
scaffold

Rigged glorious to hold

All the fiddlers and fifers and drum-
mers,

And trumpeters bold,

Not afraid of Bellini nor Auber,

Who, when the priest's hoarse,

Will strike us up something that's
brisk

For the feast's second course.

And then will the flaxen-wigged
Image

Be carried in pomp

Thro' the plain, while in gallant pro-
cession

The priests mean to stomp.

And all round the glad church lie old
bottles

With gunpowder stopped,

Which will be, when the Image re-
enters,

Religiously popped.

And at night from the crest of
Calvano

Great bonfires will hang,

On the plain will the trumpets join
chorus,

And more poppers bang !

At all events, come—to the garden,

As far as the wall,

See me tap with a hoe on the plaster

Till out there shall fall

A scorpion with wide angry nippers !

. . . "Such trifles"—you say ?

Forth, in my England at home,

Men meet gravey to-day

And debate, if abolishing Corn-laws

Is righteous and wise

—If 'tis proper, Scirocco should
vanish

In black from the skies !

THE LOST LEADER

I.

JUST for a handful of silver he
 left us,
 Just for a riband to stick in his
 coat—
 Found the one gift of which fortune
 bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us
 devote ;
 They, with the gold to give, doled
 him out silver,
 So much was their's who so little
 allowed :
 How all our copper had gone for his
 service !
 Rags—were they purple, his heart
 had been proud !
 We that had loved him so, followed
 him, honoured him,
 Lived in his mild and magnificent
 eye,
 Learned his great language, caught
 his clear accents,
 Made him our pattern to live and
 to die !
 Shakespeare was of us, Milton was
 for us,
 Burns, Shelley, were with us,—
 they watch from their graves !
 He alone breaks from the van and
 the freemen,
 He alone sinks to the rear and the
 slaves !

II.

We shall march prospering,—not
 thro' his presence ;
 Songs may inspirit us,—not from
 his lyre ;
 Deeds will be done,—while he boasts
 his quiescence,
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest
 bade aspire :
 Blot out his name, then,—record one
 lost soul more,
 One task more declined, one more
 footpath untrod,
 One more triumph for devils, and
 sorrow for angels,
 One wrong more to man, one more
 insult to God !
 Life's night begins : let him never
 come back to us !
 There would be doubt, hesitation
 and pain,
 Forced praise on our part—the
 glimmer of twilight,
 Never glad confident morning
 again !
 Best fight on well, for we taught him,
 —strike gallantly,
 Aim at our heart ere we pierce
 through his own ;
 Then let him receive the new know-
 ledge and wait us,
 Pardon'd in Heaven, the first by
 the throne !

THE LOST MISTRESS

I.

ALL's over, then—does truth sound
bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrow's good-night
twitter
About your cottage eaves!

II.

And the leaf-buds on the vine are
woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully
—You know the red turns gray.

III.

To-morrow we meet the same then,
dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?

Mere friends are we,—well, friends
the merest
Keep much that I'll resign:

IV.

For each glance of that eye so bright,
and black,
Though I keep with heart's endea-
vour,—
Your voice, when you wish the snow-
drops back,
Though it stays in my soul for
ever!—

V.

—Yet I will but say what mere
friends say,
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as
all may,
Or so very little longer!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

I.

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-
wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny
leaf.
While the chaffinch sings on the
orchard bough
In England—now !

II.

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all
the swallows—

Hark ! where my blossomed pear-tree
in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the
clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent
spray's edge
That's the wise thrush; he sings each
song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could
recapture
The first fine careless rapture !
And though the fields look rough with
hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes
anew
The buttercups, the little children's
dower,
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-
flower.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to
the north-west died away ;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red,
reeking into Cadiz Bay ;
Bluish mid the burning water, full in
face Trafalgar lay ;
In the dimmest north-east distance,
dawned Gibraltar grand and gray ;

“ Here and here did England help
me,—how can I help England ? ”
—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening,
turn to God to praise and
pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder,
silent over Africa.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

[ROME, 15—]

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity !
 Draw round my bed : is Anselm keep-
 ing back ?
 Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God,
 I know not ! Well --
 She, men would have to be your
 mother once,
 Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she
 was !
 What's done is done, and she is dead
 beside,
 Dead long ago, and I am Bishop
 since,
 And as she died so must we die our-
 selves,
 And thence ye may perceive the
 world's a dream.
 Life, how and what is it ? As here I
 lie
 In this state-chamber, dying by de-
 grees,
 Hours and long hours in the dead
 night, I ask
 "Do I live, am I dead ?" Peace,
 peace seems all.
 St. Praxed's ever was the church for
 peace ;
 And so, about this tomb of mine, I
 fought
 With tooth and nail to save my niche,
 ye know :
 Old Gandolf cozened me, despite
 my care ;
 Shrewd was that scratch from out the
 corner South
 He graced his carrion with, God
 curse the same !

Yet still my niche is not so cramped
 but thence
 One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
 And somewhat of the choir, those
 silent seats,
 And up into the aery dome where live
 The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to
 lurk :
 And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
 And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
 With those nine columns round me,
 two and two,
 The odd one at my feet where Anselm
 stands :
 Peach-blossom marble all, the rare,
 the ripe,
 As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty
 pulse
 —Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-
 stone,
 Put me where I may look at him !
 True peach,
 Rosy and flawless : how I earned the
 prize !
 Draw close : that conflagration of my
 church
 What then ? So much was saved
 if aught were missed !
 My sons, ye would not be my death ?
 Go dig
 The white-grape vineyard where the
 oil-press stood,
 Drop water gently till the surface sinks,
 And if ye find . . . Ah, God I know
 not, I ! . . .
 Bedded in store of rotten figleaves soft,
 And corded up in a tight olive-trail,

Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's
breast . . .

Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas
all,

That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between
my knees,

Like God the Father's globe on both
his hands

Ye worship in the Jesu Church so
gay,

For Gandolf shall not choose but see
and burst !

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our
years :

Man goeth to the grave, and where is
he ?

Did I say basalt for my slab, sons ?
Black

'Twas ever antique-black I meant !
How else

Shall ye contrast my frieze to come
beneath ?

The bas-relief in bronze ye promised
me,

Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of,
and perchance

Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the

mount,
St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan

Ready to twitch the Nymph's last
garment off,

And Moses with the tables . . . but
I know

Ye mark me not ! What do they
whisper thee,

Child of my bowels, Anselm ? Ah,
ye hope

To revel down my villas while I gasp
bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy

travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top

chuckles at !

Nay, boys, ye love me - all of jasper,
then !

'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I
grieve

My bath must needs be left behind,
alas !

One block, pure green as a pistachio
nut,

There's plenty jasper somewhere in
the world

And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek

manuscript
And mistresses with great smooth

marbly limbs ?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's
every word,

No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second
line—

Tully, my masters ? Ulpian serves
his need !

And then how I shall lie through cen-
turies,

And hear the blessed mutter of the
mass,

And see God made and eaten all day
long,

And feel the steady candle-flame, and
taste

Good strong thick stupefying incense-
smoke !

For as I lie here, hours of the dead
night,

Dying in state and by such slow
degrees,

I fold my arms as if they clasped a
crook,

And stretch my feet forth straight as
stone can point,

And let the bedclothes for a mortcloth
drop

Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-
work :

And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange
thoughts

Grow, with a certain humming in my
ears,

About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, Popes, Cardinals and

Priests,
St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount,

Your tall pale mother with her talking
eyes,

And new-found agate urns as fresh as
day,

And marble's language, Latin pure,
discreet,

—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
 No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
 Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
 All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
 My villas: will ye ever eat my heart?
 Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
 They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
 Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
 Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
 With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
 And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
 That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
 To comfort me on my entablature
 Whereon I am to lie till I must ask

"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
 For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
 To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
 Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammysquares which sweat
 As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
 And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
 Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
 But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
 —Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
 And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
 That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
 Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
 As still he envied me, so fair she was!

GARDEN-FANCIES

I

THE FLOWER'S NAME

I.

HERE'S the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while
since :

Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss
Hinders the hinges and makes them
wince !

She must have reached this shrub ere
she turn'd.

As back with that murmur the wicket
swung ;

For she laid the poor snail, my chance
foot spurned,

To feed and forget it the leaves
among.

II.

Down this side of the gravel-walk
She went while her robe's edge
brushed the box :

And here she paused in her gracious
talk

To point me a moth on the milk-
white flox.

Roses, ranged in valiant row,
I will never think that she passed
you by !

She loves you noble roses, I know ;
But yonder, see, where the rock-
plants lie !

III.

This flower she stopped at, finger on
lip,

Stooped over, in doubt, as settling
its claim ;

Till she gave me, with pride to make
no slip,

Its soft meandering Spanish name.
What a name ! was it love, or
praise ?

Speech half-asleep, or song half-
awake ?

I must learn Spanish, one of these
days,

Only for that slow sweet name's
sake.

IV.

Roses, if I live and do well,

I may bring her, one of these
days,

To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish
phrase !

But do not detain me now ; for she
lingers

There, like sunshine over the
ground,

And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

V.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you
grow not,

Stay as you are and be loved for
ever !

Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow
not,

Mind, the shut pink mouth opens
never !

For while thus it pouts, her fingers
wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves be-
tween,
Till round they turn and down they
nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

VI.

Where I find her not, beauties vanish :
Whither I follow her, beauties
flee :

Is there no method to tell her in
Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed
it with me ?
Come, bud, show me the least of her
traces,
Treasure my lady's lightest foot-
fall
—Ah, you may flout and turn up
your faces—
Roses, you are not so fair after
all !

II

SIDRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS

I.

Plague take all your pedants, say I !
He who wrote what I hold in my
hand,
Centuries back was so good as to die,
Leaving this rubbish to cumber the
land ;
This, that was a book in its time,
Printed on paper and bound in
leather.
Last month in the white of a matin-
prime
Just when the birds sang all to-
gether.

II.

Into the garden I brought it to read,
And under the arbut and laurustine
Read it, so help me grace in my need,
From title-page to closing line.
Chapter on chapter did I count,
As a curious traveller counts Stone-
henge ;
Added up the mortal amount ;
And then proceeded to my revenge.

III.

Yonder's a plum-tree, with a crevice
An owl would build in, were he
but sage ;
For a lap of moss, like a fine pont-levis
In a castle of the middle age,

Joins to a lip of gum, pure amber ;
When he'd be private, there might
he spend
Hours alone in his lady's chamber :
Into this crevice I dropped our
friend.

IV.

Splash, went he, as under he ducked,
—I knew at the bottom rain-drip-
pings stagnate ;
Next a handful of blossoms I plucked
To bury him with, my bookshelf's
magnate ;
Then I went in doors, brought out a
loaf,
Half a cheese, and a bottle of
Chablis ;
Lay on the grass and forgot the gaf
Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais.

V.

Now, this morning, betwixt the moss
And gum that locked our friend in
limbo,
A spider had spun his web across,
And sate in the midst with arms
a-kimbo :
So, I took pity, for learning's sake.
And, *de profundis, accentibus letis,*
Cantate ! quoth I, as I got a rake,
And up I fished his delectable treatise.

VI.

Here you have it, dry in the sun,
 With all the binding all of a
 blister,
 And great blue spots where the ink
 has run,
 And reddish streaks that wink and
 glisten
 O'er the page so beautifully yellow—
 Oh, well have the droppings played
 their tricks!
 Did he guess how toadstools grow,
 this fellow?
 Here's one stuck in his chapter six!

VII.

How did he like it, when the live
 creatures
 Tickled and toused and browsed
 him all over,
 And worm, slug, eft, with serious
 features,
 Came in, each one, for his right of
 trover;
 When the water-beetle with great
 blind deaf face
 Made of her eggs the stately de-
 posit,
 And the newt borrowed just so much
 of the preface
 As tiled in the top of his black
 wife's closet.

VIII.

All that life, and fun, and romping,
 All that frisking, and twisting, and
 coupling,
 While slowly our poor friend's leaves
 were swamping,
 And clasps were cracking, and
 covers suppling!
 As if you had carried sour John Knox
 To the play-house at Paris, Vienna,
 or Munich,
 Fastened him into a front-row box,
 And danced off the Ballet with
 trousers and tunic.

IX.

Come, old martyr! What, torment
 enough is it?
 Back to my room shall you take
 your sweet self!
 Good-bye, mother-beetle; husband-
 eft, *sufficit!*
 See the snug niche I have made on
 my shelf:
 A.'s book shall prop you up, B.'s shall
 cover you,
 Here's C. to be grave with, or D.
 to be gay,
 And with E. on each side, and F.
 right over you,
 Dry-rot at ease till the Judgment-
 day!

THE LABORATORY

[ANCIEN RÉGIME]

I.

Now that I, tying thy glass mask
tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes
curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's
smithy
Which is the poison to poison her,
prithee?

II.

He is with her; and they know that
I know
Where they are, what they do: they
believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me
fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for
them!—I am here.

III.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy
paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in
haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy
strange things,
Than go where men wait me and
lance at the King's.

IV.

That in the mortar—you call it a
gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold
oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite
blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison
too?

V.

Had I but all of them, thee and thy
treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible
pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a
casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filagree-
basket!

VI.

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge
to give
And Pauline should have just thirty
minutes to live!
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with
her head,
And her breast, and her arms, and
her hands, should drop dead!

VII.

Quick—is it finished? The colour's
too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing
and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn
it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and
prefer!

VIII.

What a drop! She's not little, no
minion like me
That's why she ensnared him: this
never will free
The soul from those strong, great
eyes,—say, "no!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-
go.

IX.

For only last night, as they whispered,
I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that
I thought
Could I keep them one half minute
fixed, she would fall,
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this
does it all!

X.

Not that I bid you spare her the
pain!
Let death be felt and the proof
remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying
face!

XI.

Is it done? Take my mask off!
Nay, be not morose,
It kills her, and this prevents seeing
it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole for-
tune's fee—
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever
hurt me?

XII.

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold
to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my
mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror
it brings
Ere I know it— next moment I dance
at the King's!

THE CONFESSIONAL.

[SPAIN]

I.

IT is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . . all they fear
or hope
Are lies, and lies—there ! thro' my
door
And ceiling, there ! and walls and
floor,
There, lies, they lie, shall still be
hurled,
Till spite of them I reach the world !

II.

You think Priests just and holy men !
Before they put me in this den,
I was a human creature too,
With flesh and blood like one of you,
A girl that laughed in beauty's pride
Like lilies in your world outside.

III.

I had a lover—shame avaunt !
This poor wrenched body, grim and
gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned.
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint : one night he
kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

IV.

So, next day when the accustomed
train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said—and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go,
And pass to the confession-chair,
And tell the old mild father there.

But when I falter Beltran's name,
"Ha?" quoth the father ; "much I
blame
"The sin ; yet wherefore idly grieve ?
"Despair not,—strenuously retrieve !
"Nay, I will turn this love of thine
"To lawful love, almost divine.

VI.

"For he is young, and led astray,
"This Beltran, and he schemes, men
say,
"To change the laws of church and
state ;
"So, thine shall be an angel's fate,
"Who, ere the thunder breaks,
should roll
"Its cloud away and save his soul.

VII.

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
"Thou mayst demand and be pos-
sessed
"Of all his plans, and next day steal
"To me, and all those plans reveal,
"That I and every priest, to purge
"His soul, may fast and use the
scourge."

VIII.

That father's beard was long and
white,
With love and truth his brow seemed
bright ;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy,
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

IX.

He told me what he would not tell
 For hope of Heaven or fear of Hell ;
 And I lay listening in such pride,
 And, soon as he had left my side,
 Tripped to the church by morning-
 light
 To save his soul in his despite.

X.

I told the father all his schemes,
 Who were his comrades, what their
 dreams ;
 " And now make haste," I said, " to
 pray
 " The one spot from his soul away ;
 " To-night he comes, but not the
 same
 " Will look ! " At night he never
 came.

XI.

Nor next night: on the after-
 morn,
 I went forth with a strength new-
 born:

The church was empty ; something
 drew
 My steps into the street ; I knew
 It led me to the market-place-
 Where, lo,—on high—the father's
 face !

XII.

That horrible black scaffold drest—
 The stapled block . . . God sink the
 rest !
 That head strapped back, that blind-
 ing vest,
 Those knotted hands and naked
 breast—
 Till near one busy hangman pressed—
 And—on the neck these arms car-
 essed. . . .

XIII.

No part in aught they hope or fear !
 No Heaven with them, no Hell,—
 and here.
 No Earth, not so much space as pens
 My body in their worst of dens
 But shall bear God and Man my cry—
 Lies—lies, again— and still, they lie !

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

I.

YOU'RE my friend :

I was the man the Duke spoke to ;

I helped the Duchess to cast off his
yoke, too ;

So, here's the tale from beginning to
end,

My friend !

II.

Ours is a great wild country :

If you climb to our castle's top,

I don't see where your eye can stop ;

For when you've passed the corn-field
country,

Where vineyards leave off, flocks are
packed,

And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,

And cattle-tract to open-chase,

And open-chase to the very base

Of the mountain, where, at a funeral
pace,

Round about, solemn and slow.

One by one, row after row,

Up and up the pine-trees go,

So, like black priests up, and so

Down the other side again

To another greater, wilder country,

That's one vast red drear burnt-up
plain,

Branched thro' and thro' with many
a vein

Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt ;

Look right, look left, look straight
before,—

Beneath they mine, above they smelt,

Copper-ore and iron-ore,

And forge and furnace mould and
melt.

And so on, more and ever more,

Till, at the last, for a bounding belt,
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great
sea shore,

—And the whole is our Duke's
country !

III.

I was born the day this present Duke
was—

(And O, says the song, ere I was old !)

In the castle where the other Duke
was—

(When I was hopeful and young, not
old !)

I in the Kennel, he in the Bower :

We are of like age to an hour.

My father was Huntsman in that day ;

Who has not heard my father say

That, when a boar was brought to bay,

Three times, four times out of five,

With his huntspear he'd contrive

To get the killing-place transfixed,

And pin him true, both eyes betwixt ?

And that's why the old Duke had
rather

Have lost a salt-pit than my father,

And loved to have him ever in call ;

That's why my father stood in the hall

When the old Duke brought his infant
out

To show the people, and while they
passed

The wondrous bantling round about,

Was first to start at the outside blast

As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn.

Just a month after the babe was born.

"And" quoth the Kaiser's courier,

"since

"The Duke has got an Heir, our
Prince

"Needs the Duke's self at his side : " !

The Duke looked down and seemed
to wince,

But he thought of wars o'er the world
wide,

Castles a-fire, men on their march,

The toppling tower, the crashing
arch ;

And up he looked, and awhile he eyed
The row of crests and shields and
banners,

Of all achievements after all manners,
And "ay," said the Duke with a
surly pride.

The more was his comfort when he
died

At next year's end, in a velvet suit,
With a gilt glove on his hand, and
his foot

In a silken shoe for a leather boot,
Petticoated like a herald,

In a chamber next to an ante-room,

Where he breathed the breath of page
and groom,

What he called stink, and they,
perfume :

—They should have set him on red
Berold,

Mad with pride, like fire to manage !

They should have got his cheek fresh
tannage

Such a day as to-day in the merry
sunshine !

Had they stuck on his fist a rough-
foot merlin !

—Hark, the wind's on the heath at
its game !

Oh for a noble falcon-lanner

To flap each broad wing like a banner,
And turn in the wind, and dance like
flame !

Had they broached a cask of white
beer from Berlin !

—Or if you incline to prescribe mere
wine—

Put to his lips when they saw him
pine,

A cup of our own Moldavia fine,
Cotnar, for instance, green as May
sorrel,

And ropy with sweet,—we shall not
quarrel.

IV.

So, at home, the sick tall yellow
Duchess

Was left with the infant in her clutches,
She being the daughter of God knows
who :

And now was the time to revisit her
tribe.

So, abroad and afar they went, the
two,

And let our people rail and gibe
At the empty Hall and extinguished
fire,

As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,
Till after long years we had our desire,
And back came the Duke and his
mother again.

V.

And he came back the pertest little ape
That ever affronted human shape :

Full of his travel, struck at himself
You'd say, he despised our bluff old
ways

—Not he ! For in Paris they told
the elf

That our rough North land was the
Land of Lays,

The one good thing left in evil days ;
Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic
Time,

And only in wild nooks like ours
Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,
And see true castles, with proper
towers.

Young-hearted women, old-minded
men,

And manners now as manners were
then.

So, all that the old Dukes had been,
without knowing it,

This Duke would fain know he was,
without being it ;

'Twas not for the joy's self, but the
joy of his showing it,

Nor for the pride's self, but the pride
of our seeing it,

He revived all usages thoroughly
worn-out,

The souls of them fumed-forth, the
hearts of them torn-out :

And chief in the chase his neck he
perilled,
On a lathy horse, all legs and length,
With blood for bone, all speed, no
strength ;

-They should have set him on red
Berold,
With the red eye slow consuming in
fire,
And the thin stiff ear like an abbey
spire !

VI.

Well, such as he was, he must marry,
we heard :

And out of a convent, at the word,
Came the Lady, in time of spring.

-Oh, old thoughts they cling, they
cling !

That day, I know, with a dozen oaths
I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes
Fit for the chase of urox or buttle
In winter-time when you need to
muffle :

But the Duke had a mind we should
cut a figure,

And so we saw the Lady arrive :

My friend, I have seen a white crane
bigger !

She was the smallest lady alive,
Made, in a piece of Nature's madness,
Too small, almost, for the life and
gladness

That over-filled her, as some hive
Out of the bears' reach on the high
trees

Is crowded with its safe merry bees :
In truth, she was not hard to please !

Up she looked, down she looked,
round at the mead,

Straight at the castle, that's best
indeed

To look at from outside the walls :

As for us, styled the "serfs and
thralls,"

She as much thanked me as if she had
said it,

(With her eyes, do you understand ?
Because I patted her horse while I
led it ;

And Max, who rode on her other
hand,

Said, no bird flew past but she en-
quired

What its true name was, nor ever
seemed tired --

If that was an eagle she saw hover, --

If the green and gray bird on the field
was the plover.

When suddenly appeared the Duke,
And as down she sprung, the small
foot pointed

On to my hand, -- as with a rebuke.

And as if his backbone were not
jointed,

The Duke stepped rather aside than
forward,

And welcomed her with his grandest
smile ;

And, mind you, his mother all the
while

Chilled in the rear, like a wind to
Norward ;

And up, like a weary yawn, with its
pullies

Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcullis ;
And, like a glad sky the north-wind
sullies,

The Lady's face stopped its play,
As if her first hair had grown gray

For such things must begin some one
day !

VII.

In a day or two she was well again ;
As who should say, " You labour in
vain !

" This is all a jest against God, who
meant

" I should ever be, as I am, content

" And glad in his sight : therefore,
glad I will be ! "

So, smiling as at first went she.

VIII.

She was active, stirring, all fire --

Could not rest, could not tire --

To a stone she had given life !

(I myself loved once, in my day,)

-For a Shepherd's, Miner's, Hunts-
man's wife,

(I had a wife, I know what I say.)

Never in all the world such an one !

And here was plenty to be done,

And she that could do it, great or small,
 She was to do nothing at all.
 There was already this man in his post,
 This in his station, and that in his office,
 And the Duke's plan admitted a wife,
 at most,
 To meet his eye, with the other trophies,
 Now outside the Hall, now in it.
 To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen,
 At the proper place in the proper minute,
 And die away the life between.
 And it was amusing enough, each infraction
 Of rule (but for after-sadness that came)—
 To hear the consummate self-satisfaction
 With which the young Duke and the old Dame
 Would let her advise, and criticise.
 And, being a fool, instruct the wise.
 And, child-like, parcel out praise or blame :
 They bore it all in complacent guise,
 As tho' an artificer, after contriving
 A wheel-work image as if it were living,
 Should find with delight it could motion to strike him !
 So found the Duke, and his mother like him,—
 The Lady hardly got a rebuff—
 That had not been contemptuous enough.
 With his cursed smirk, as he nodded applause,
 And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

IX.

So, the little Lady grew silent and thin,
 Paling and ever paling,
 As the way is with a hid chagrin ;
 And the Duke perceived that she was ailing,

And said in his heart, "'Tis done to spite me,
 "But I shall find in my power to right me !"
 Don't swear, friend—the Old One,
 many a year,
 Is in Hell, and the Duke's self . . .
 you shall hear.

X.

Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning,
 When the stag had to break with his foot, of a morning,
 A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice
 That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,
 Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,
 And another, and another, and faster and faster,
 Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled :
 Then it so chanced that the Duke our master
 Asked himself what were the pleasures in season,
 And found, since the calendar bade him be hearty,
 He should do the Middle Age no treason
 In resolving on a hunting-party.
 Always provided, old books showed the way of it !
 What meant old poets by their strictures ?
 And when old poets had said their say of it,
 How taught old painters in their pictures ?
 We must revert to the proper channels,
 Workings in tapestry, paintings on pannels,
 And gather up Woodcraft's authentic traditions :
 Here was food for our various ambitions,
 As on each case, exactly stated,
 —To encourage your dog, now, the properest chirrup,
 Or best prayer to St. Hubert on mounting your stirrup—

We of the house old took thought
and debated.
Blessed was he whose back ached
with the jerkin
His sire was wont to do forest-work
in;
Blessed he who nobly sunk "ohs"
And "ahs" while he tugged on his
grand-sire's trunk-shoe;
What signified hats if they had no
rims on,
Each leaning before and behind like
the cadope,
And able to serve at sea for a shallop,
Loaded with lacquer and looped with
crimson?
So that the deer now, to make a short
rhyme on't,
What with our Venerers, Prickers,
and Verderers,
Might hope for real hunters at length,
and not murderers.
And oh, the Duke's tailor—he had a
hot time on't!

XL.

Now you must know, that when the
first dizziness
Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-
boots subsided,
The Duke put this question, "The
Duke's part provided,
"Had not the Duchess some share in
the business?"
For out of the mouth of two or three
witnesses,
Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses:
And, after much laying of heads
together,
Somebody's cap got a notable feather
By the announcement with proper
unction
That he had discovered the lady's
function:
Since ancient authors held this tenet.
"When horns wind a mort and the
deer is at siege,
"Let the dame of the Castle prick
forth on her jennet,
"And with water to wash the hands
of her liege

"In a clean ewer with a fair toweling,
"Let her preside at the disembowel-
ing."
Now, my friend, if you had so little
relation,
As to catch a hawk, some falcon-
lamer,
And thrust her broad wings like a
hammer
Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon,
And if day by day, and week by week,
You cut her claws, and sealed her eye
And clipped her wings, and tied her
beak,
Would it cause you any great surprise
If when you decided to give her an
airing
You found she needed a little preparing?
—I say, should you be such a curmud-
geon,
If she clung to the perch, as to take
it in dudgeon?
Yet when the Duke to his lady signi-
fied,
Just a day before, as he judged most
dignified,
In what a pleasure she was to partici-
pate, -
And, instead of leaping wide in
flashes,
Her eyes just lifted their long lashes,
As if pressed by fatigue even he could
not dissipate,
And duly acknowledged the Duke's
forethought,
But spoke of her health, if her health
were worth aught,
Of the weight by day and the watch
by night,
And much wrong now that used to be
right,
So, thanking him, declined the hunt-
ing.
Was conduct ever more affronting?
With all the ceremony settled—
With the towel ready, and the sewer
Polishing up his oldest ewer,
And the jennet pitched upon, a piebald,
Black-barred, cream-coated and pink
eye-ball'd,—
No wonder if the Duke was nettled!
And when she persisted nevertheless,—

Well, I suppose here's the time to
confess
That there ran half round our Lady's
chamber,
A balcony none of the hardest to
clamber;
And that Jacynth the fire-woman,
ready in waiting,
Stayed in call outside, what need of
relating?
And since Jacynth was like a June
rose, why, a fervent
Adorer of Jacynth, of course, was
your servant;
And if she had the habit to peep
through the casement,
How could I keep at any vast dis-
tance?
And so, as I say, on the Lady's per-
sistence,
The Duke, dumb-stricken with amaze-
ment,
Stood for a while in a sultry smother,
And then, with a smile that partook
of the awful,
Turned her over to his yellow mother
To learn what was decorous and law-
ful;
And the mother smelt blood with a
cat-like instinct,
As her cheek quick whitened thro' all
its quince-tinct—
Oh, but the Lady heard the whole
truth at once!
What meant she?—Who was she?—
Her duty and station,
The wisdom of age and the folly of
youth, at once,
Its decent regard and its fitting rela-
tion—
In brief, my friend, set all the devils
in hell free
And turn them out to carouse in a
belfry,
And treat the priests to a fifty-part
canon,
And then you may guess how that
tongue of hers ran on!
Well, somehow or other it ended at
last
And, licking her whiskers, out she
passed;

And after her,—making (he hoped) a
face
Like Emperor Nero or Sultan Saladin,
Stalked the Duke's self with the
austere grace
Of ancient hero or modern paladin,
From door to staircase—oh, such a
solemn
Unbending of the vertebral column!

XII.

However, at sunrise our company
mustered
And here was the huntsman bidding
unkennel,
And there 'neath his bonnet the
pricker blustered,
With feather dank as a bough of wet
fennel;
For the court-yard's four walls were
filled with fog
You might cut as an axe chops a log.
Like so much wool for colour and
bulkiness;
A-out rode the Duke in a perfect
sulkiness.
Since before breakfast, a man feels
but queasily,
And a sinking at the lower abdomen
Begins the day with indifferent omen:
And lo, as he looked around uneasily,
The sun ploughed the fog up and
drove it asunder
This way and that from the valley
under:
And, looking thro' the court-yard arch,
Down in the valley, what should meet
him
But a troop of Gypsies on their march,
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet
him.

XIII.

Now, in your land, Gypsies reach you,
only
After reaching all lands beside:
North they go, south they go, troop-
ing or lonely,
And still, as they travel far and wide,
Catch they and keep now a trace here,
a trace there,
That puts you in mind of a place here,
a place there:

But with us, I believe they rise out of
 the ground,
 And nowhere else, I take it, are found
 With the earth-tint yet so freshly em-
 browned :
 Born, no doubt, like insects which
 breed on
 The very fruit they are meant to feed on :
 For the earth—not a use to which
 they don't turn it,
 The ore that grows in the mountain's
 womb.
 Or the sand in the pits like a honey-
 comb.
 They sift and soften it, bake it and
 burn it—
 Whether they weld you, for instance,
 a snaffle
 With side-bars never a brute can
 baffle ;
 Or a lock that's a puzzle of wards
 within wards :
 Or, if your colt's fore-foot inclines to
 curve inwards,
 Horseshoes they'd hammer which
 turn on a swivel
 And won't allow the hoof to shrivel :
 Then they cast bells like the shell of
 the winkle.
 That keep a stout heart in the ram
 with their tinkle :
 But the sand—they pinch and pound
 it like otters ;
 Commend me to Gypsy glass-makers
 and potters !
 Glasses they'll blow you, crystal-clear,
 Where just a faint cloud of rose shall
 appear,
 As if in pure water you dropped and
 let die
 A bruised black-blooded mulberry ;
 And that other sort, their crowning
 pride,
 With long white threads distinct
 inside.
 Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots
 which dangle
 Loose such a length and never tangle,
 Where the bold sword-lily cuts the
 clear waters.
 And the cup-lily couches with all the
 white daughters :

Such are the works they put their
 hand to.
 And the uses they turn and twist iron
 and sand to.
 And these made the troop which our
 Duke saw sally
 Towards his castle from out of the
 valley,
 Men and women, like new-hatched
 spiders,
 Come out with the morning to greet
 our riders ;
 And up they wound till they reached
 the ditch,
 Whereat all stopped save one, a witch,
 That I knew, as she hobbled from the
 group,
 By her ga't, directly, and her stoop,
 I, whom Jacynth was used to impor-
 tune
 To let that same witch tell us our for-
 tune.
 The oldest Gypsy then above ground ;
 And, so sure as the autumn season
 came round,
 She paid us a visit for profit or pas-
 time,
 And every time, as she swore, for the
 last time.
 And presently she was seen to sidle
 Up to the Duke till she touched his
 bridle,
 So that the horse of a sudden reared up
 As under its nose the old witch peered
 up
 With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-
 holes
 Of no use now but to gather brine,
 And began a kind of level whine
 Such as they used to sing to their viols
 When their ditties they go grinding
 Up and down with nobody minding :
 And, then as of old, at the end of the
 humming
 Her usual presents were forthcoming
 —A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest
 of trebles,
 (Just as a sea-shore stone holding a
 dozen fine pebbles.)
 Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw
 on a pipe-end,—
 And so she awaited her annual stipend.

But this time, the Duke would scarcely
vouchsafe

A word in reply ; and in vain she felt
With twitching fingers at her belt

For the purse of sleek pine-martin
pelt,

Ready to put what he gave in her
pouch safe,

Till, either to quicken his apprehen-
sion,

Or possibly with an after-intention.

She was come, she said, to pay her
duty

To the new Duchess, the youthful
beauty.

No sooner had she named his Lady.

Than a shine lit up the face so shady,
And its smirk returned with a novel
meaning

For it struck him, the babe just wanted
weaning ;

If one gave her a taste of what life
was and sorrow,

She, foolish to-day, would be wiser
to-morrow ;

And who so fit a teacher of trouble
As this sordid crone bent well nigh
double ?

So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture,
(If such it was, for they grow so
hirsute

That their own fleece serves for
natural fur suit)

He was contrasting, 'twas plain from
his gesture,

The life of the lady so flower-like and
delicate

With the loathsome squalor of this
helicat.

I, in brief, was the man the Duke
beckoned

From out of the throng, and while I
drew near

He told the crone, as I since have
reckoned

By the way he bent and spoke into
her ear

With circumspection and mystery,

The main of the Lady's history.

Her frowardness and ingratitude ;

And for all the crone's submissive
attitude

I could see round her mouth the loose
plaits tightening,

And her brow with assenting intelli-
gence brightening.

As tho' she engaged with hearty good
will

Whatever he now might enjoin to
fulfil,

And promised the lady a thorough
frightening.

And so, just giving her a glimpse

Of a purse, with the air of a man who
imps

The wing of the hawk that shall fetch
the hernshaw,

He bade me take the gypsy mother

And set her telling some story or other

Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw,

To while away a weary hour

For the Lady left alone in her bower,

Whose mind and body craved exertion

And yet shrank from all better diver-
sion.

XIV.

Then clapping heel to his horse, the
mere curvetter,

Out rode the Duke, and after his hollo
Horses and hounds swept, huntsman

and servitor,

And back I turned and bade the crone
follow.

And what makes me confident what's
to be told you

Had all along been of this crone's
devising,

Is, that, on looking round sharply,
behold you,

There was a novelty quick as surprising:

For first, she had shot up a full head
in stature,

And her step kept pace with mine
nor faltered.

As if age had foregone its usurpature,

And the ignoble mien was wholly
altered,

And the face looked quite of another
nature,

And the change reached too, whatever
the change meant,

Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrange-
ment,

For where its tatters hung loose like
 sedges,
 Gold coins were glittering on the
 edges,
 Like the band-roll strung with tomons
 Which proves the veil a Persian
 woman's :
 And under her brow, like a snail's
 horns newly
 Come out as after the rain he paces,
 Two unmistakable eye-points duly
 Live and aware looked out of their
 places.
 So we went and found Jacynth at the
 entry
 Of the Lady's chamber standing
 sentry ;
 I told the command and produced my
 companion,
 And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any one.
 For since last night, by the same token,
 Not a single word had the Lady
 spoken :
 So they went in both to the presence
 together,
 While I in the balcony watched the
 weather.

XV.

And now, what took place at the very
 first of all,
 I cannot tell, as I never could learn it :
 Jacynth constantly wished a curse to
 fall
 On that little head of hers and burn it.
 If she knew how she came to drop so
 soundly
 Asleep of a sudden and there continue
 The whole time sleeping as profoundly
 As one of the boars my father would
 pin you
 Twixt the eyes where the life holds
 garrison,
 Jacynth forgive me the comparison !
 But where I begin my own narration
 Is a little after I took my station
 To breathe the fresh air from the
 balcony,
 And, having in those days a falcon eye,
 To follow the hunt thro' the open
 country,
 From where the bushes thinnier crested

The hillocks, to a plain where's not
 one tree :
 When, in a moment, my ear was
 arrested
 By—was it singing, or was it saying,
 Or a strange musical instrument play-
 ing
 In the chamber?—and to be certain
 I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain
 And there lay Jacynth asleep,
 Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,
 In a rosy sleep along the floor
 With her head against the door ;
 While in the midst, on the seat of
 state,
 Like a Queen the Gypsy woman sate,
 With head and face downbent
 On the Lady's head and face intent,
 For, coiled at her feet like a child at
 ease,
 The Lady sate between her knees
 And o'er them the Lady's clasped
 hands met,
 And on those hands her chin was set.
 And her upturned face met the face
 of the crone
 Wherein the eyes had grown and
 grown
 As if she could double and quadruple
 At pleasure the play of either pupil
 —Very like by her hands slow fanning,
 As up and down like a gor-crow's
 flappers
 They moved to measure like bell
 clappers
 —I said, is it blessing, is it banning,
 Do they applaud you or burlesque you?
 Those hands and fingers with no flesh
 on ?
 When, just as I thought to spring in
 to the rescue,
 At once I was stopped by the Lady's
 expression :
 For it was life her eyes were drinking
 From the crone's wide pair above
 unwinking,
 Life's pure fire received without
 shrinking,
 Into the heart and breast whose
 heaving
 Told you no single drop they were
 leaving—

Life, that filling her, past redundant
 Into her very hair, back swerving
 Over each shoulder, loose and
 abundant,
 As her head thrown back showed the
 white throat curving,
 And the very tresses shared in the
 pleasure,
 Moving to the mystic measure,
 Bounding as the bosom bounded.
 I stopped short, more and more con-
 founded,
 As still her cheeks burned and eyes
 glistened,
 As she listened and she listened,—
 When all at once a hand detained me,
 And the selfsame contagion gained me.
 And I kept time to the wondrous
 chime,
 Making out words and prose and
 rhyme,
 Till it seemed that the music furled
 Its wings like a task fulfilled, and
 dropped
 From under the words it first had
 propped,
 And left them midway in the world.
 And word took word as hand takes
 hand,
 I could hear at last, and understand,
 And when I held the unbroken thread,
 The Gypsy said :—
 “And so at last we find my tribe,
 And so I set thee in the midst,
 And to one and all of them describe
 What thou saidst and what thou
 didst,
 Our long and terrible journey thro’,
 And all thou art ready to say and do
 In the trials that remain :
 I trace them the vein and the other vein
 That meet on thy brow and part again,
 Making our rapid mystic mark ;
 And I bid my people prove and probe
 Each eye’s profound and glorious
 globe
 Till they detect the kindred spark
 In those depths so dear and dark,
 Like the spots that snap, and burst,
 and flee,
 Circling over the midnight sea.

And on that young round cheek of
 thine
 I make them recognise the tinge,
 As when of the costly scarlet wine
 They drip so much as will impinge
 And spread in a thinnest scale afloat
 One thick gold drop from the olive’s
 coat
 Over a silver plate whose sheen
 Still thro’ the mixture shall be seen.
 For, so I prove thee, to one and all,
 Fit, when my people ope their breast,
 To see the sign, and hear the call,
 And take the vow, and stand the test
 Which adds one more child to the
 rest—
 When the breast is bare and the arms
 are wide,
 And the world is left outside.
 For there is probation to decree,
 And many and long must the trials be
 Thou shalt victoriously endure,
 If that brow is true and those eyes are
 sure ;
 Like a jewel-finder’s fierce assay
 Of the prize he dug from its mountain
 tomb,—
 Let once the vindicating ray
 Leap out amid the anxious gloom,
 And steel and fire have done their
 part
 And the prize falls on its finder’s
 heart ;
 So, trial after trial past,
 Wilt thou fall at the very last
 Breathless, half in trance
 With the thrill of the great deliver-
 ance,
 Into our arms for evermore ;
 And thou shalt know, those arms once
 curled
 About thee, what we knew before.
 How love is the only good in the
 world.
 Henceforth be loved as heart can love,
 Or brain devise, or hand approve !
 Stand up, look below,
 It is our life at thy feet we throw
 To step with into light and joy ;
 Not a power of life but we’ll employ
 To satisfy thy nature’s want ;
 Art thou the tree that props the plant,

Or the climbing plant that seeks the
tree—

Canst thou help us, must we help
thee?

If any two creatures grew into one,
They would do more than the world
has done ;

Tho' each apart were never so weak,
Yet vainly thro' the world should ye
seek

For the knowledge and the might
Which in such union grew their right :
So, to approach, at least, that end,
And blend,—as much as may be,
blend

Thee with us or us with thee,
As climbing-plant or propping-tree,
Shall some one deck thee, over and
down,

Up and about, with blossoms and
leaves?

Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland
crown,

Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine
cleaves,

Die on thy boughs and disappear
While not a leaf of thine is sere?

Or is the other fate in store,
And art thou fitted to adore.

To give thy wondrous self away,
And take a stronger nature's sway?

I foresee and I could foretell
Thy future portion, sure and well

But those passionate eyes speak true,
speak true,

And let them say what thou shalt do !
Only, be sure thy daily life,

In its peace, or in its strife,
Never shall be unobserved ;

We pursue thy whole career,
And hope for it, or doubt, or fear.—

Lo, hast thou kept thy path or swerved
We are beside thee, in all thy ways,

With our blame, with our praise,
Our shame to feel, our pride to show,

Glad, sorry—but indifferent, no !
Whether it is thy lot to go,

For the good of us all, where the
later meet

In the crowded city's horrible street ;
Or thou step alone thro' the morass
Where never sound yet was

Save the dry quick clap of the stork's
bill.

For the air is still, and the water still,
When the blue breast of the dipping
coot

Dives under, and all again is mute.
So at the last shall come old age,

Decrepit as befits that stage ;

How else wouldst thou retire apart
With the hoarded memories of thy
heart,

And gather all to the very least
Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,
Let fall through eagerness to find
The crowning dainties yet behind?

Ponder on the entire past

Laid together thus at last,

When the twilight helps to fuse

The first fresh, with the faded hues,

And the outline of the whole.

As round eve's shades their frame-
work roll.

Grandly fronts for once thy soul :

And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam
Of yet another morning breaks,

And like the hand which ends a dream,
Death, with the might of his sunbeam

Touches the flesh and the soul awakes.
Then "

Ay, then, indeed, some-
thing would happen !

But what? For here her voice changed
like a bird's ;

There grew more of the music and
less of the words ;

Had Jacynth only been by me to clap
pen

To paper and put you down every
syllable,

With those clever clerkly fingers,

All that I've forgotten as well as
what lingers

In this old brain of mine that's but
ill able

To give you even this poor version
Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with
stammering

—More fault of those who had the
hammering

Of prosody into me and syntax.

And did it, not with hobnails but tin-
tacks !

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

383

But to return from this excursion,—
Just, do you mark, when the song
was sweetest,
The peace most deep and the charm
completest,
There came, shall I say, a snap—
And the charm vanished !
And my sense returned, so strangely
banished,
And, starting as from a nap,
I knew the crone was bewitching my
lady,
With Jacynth asleep ; and but one
spring made I,
Down from the casement, round to
the portal,
Another minute and I had entered,
When the door opened, and more
than mortal
stood, with a face where to my mind
centred
All beauties I ever saw or shall see,
The Duchess—I stopped as if struck
by palsy.
She was so different, happy and
beautiful,
I felt at once that all was best,
And that I had nothing to do, for the
rest.
But wait her commands, obey and be
dutiful.
Not that, in fact, there was any com-
manding,
—I saw the glory of her eye,
And the brow's height and the breast's
expanding,
And I was hers to live or to die.
As for finding what she wanted,
You know God Almighty granted
Such little signs should serve his wild
creatures
To tell one another all their desires,
So that each knows what its friend
requires,
And does its bidding without teachers.
I preceded her ; the crone
followed silent and alone ;
I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered
In the old style ; both her eyes had
slunk
Back to their pits ; her stature shrunk ;
In short, the soul in its body sunk.

Like a blade sent home to its scabbard.
We descended, I preceding ;
Crossed the court with nobody heed-
ing ;
All the world was at the chase,
The court-yard like a desert-place,
The stable emptied of its small fry ;
I saddled myself the very palfrey
I remember patting while it carried her,
The day she arrived and the Duke
married her.
And, do you know, though it's easy
deceiving
Oneself in such matters, I can't help
believing
The lady had not forgotten it either,
And knew the poor devil so much
beneath her
Would have been only too glad for
her service
To dance on hot ploughshares like a
Turk dervise,
But unable to pay proper duty where
owing it
Was reduced to that pitiful method
of showing it :
For though the moment I began setting
His saddle on my own nag of Berold's
begetting,
(Not that I meant to be obtrusive)
She stopped me, while his rug was
shifting,
By a single rapid finger's lifting,
And, with a gesture kind but con-
clusive,
And a little shake of the head, refused
me.
I say, although she never used me,
Yet when she was mounted, the gypsy
behind her,
And I ventured to remind her,
I suppose with a voice of less steady-
ness
Than usual, for my feeling exceeded
me,
—Something to the effect that I was
in readiness
Whenever God should please she
needed me.—
Then, do you know, her face looked
down on me
With a look that placed a crown on me,

And she felt in her bosom,—mark,
her bosom—

And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom,
Dropped me—ah, had it been a purse
Of silver, my friend, or gold that's
worse,

Why, you see, as soon as I found
myself

So understood, that a true heart so
may gain

Such a reward,—I should have gone
home again,

Kissed Jacynth, and soberly 'crowned
myself!

It was a little plait of hair
Such as friends in a convent make

To wear, each for the other's sake,—
This, see, which at my breast I wear.

Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudge-
ment).

And ever shall, till the Day of Judg-
ment.

And then,—and then,—to cut short,
—this is idle,

These are feelings it is not good to
foster, —

I pushed the gate wide, she shook the
bridle,

And the palfrey bounded,—and so we
lost her!

XVI.

When the liquor's out, why clink the
cannakin?

I did think to describe you the panic in
The redoubtable breast of our master
the mannikin,

And what was the pitch of his mother's
yellowness,

How she turned as a shark to snap
the spare-rib

Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-
diving Carib,

When she heard, what she called, the
flight of the feloness—

But it seems such child's play
What they said and did with the lady
away!

And to dance on, when we've lost the
music,

Always made me—and no doubt
makes you—sick.

Nay, to my mind, the world's face
looked so stern

As that sweet form disappeared thro'
the postern,

She that kept it in constant good
humour.

It ought to have stopped; there
seemed nothing to do more.

But the world thought otherwise and
went on.

And my head's one that its spite was
spent on:

Thirty years are fled since that morn-
ing,

And with them all my head's adorn-
ing.

Nor did the old Duchess die out-
right,

As you expect, of suppressed spite,
The natural end of every adder

Not suffered to empty its poison-
bladder:

But she and her son agreed, I
take it.

That no one should touch on the
story to wake it,

For the wound in the Duke's pride
rankled fiery,

So they made no search and small
inquiry—

And when fresh gypsies have paid us
a visit, I've

Noticed the couple were never inquisi-
tive,

But told them they're folks the Duke
don't want here.

And bade them make haste and cross
the frontier.

Brief, the Duchess was gone and the
Duke was glad of it,

And the old one was in the young
one's stead,

And took, in her place, the house-
hold's head,

And a blessed time the household had
of it!

And were I not, as a man may say,
cautious

How I trench, more than needs, on
the nauseous,

I could favour you with sundry
touches

Of the paint-smutches with which the
 Duchess
 Heightened the mellowness of her
 cheek's yellowness
 (To get on faster) until at last her
 Cheek grew to be one master-plaster
 Of mucus and fucus from mere use of
 ceruse
 Till in short she grew from scalp to
 udder
 Just the object to make you shudder !

XVII.

You're my friend
 What a thing friendship is, world
 without end !
 How it gives the heart and soul a
 stir-up,
 As if somebody broached you a glori-
 ous runlet,
 And poured out all lovelily, sparkling,
 and sunlit,
 Our green Moldavia, the streaky
 syrup,
 Cotnar as old as the time of the
 Druids—
 Friendship's as good as that monarch
 of fluids
 To supple a dry brain, fill you its ins-
 and-outs,
 Gives your Life's hour-glass a shake
 when the thin sand doubts
 Whether to run on or stop short, and
 guarantees
 Age is not all made of stark sloth and
 arrant ease !
 I have seen my little Lady once more,
 Jacynth, the Gypsy, Berold, and the
 rest of it,
 For to me spoke the Duke, as I told
 you before ;
 I always wanted to make a clean
 breast of it,
 And now it is made—why, my heart's-
 blood, that went trickle,
 Trickle, but anon, in such muddy
 dribblets,
 Is pumped up brisk now, thro' the
 main ventricle,
 And genially floats me about the gib-
 lets !

I'll tell you what I intend to do :
 I must see this fellow his sad life thro'
 —He is our Duke after all,
 And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall ;
 My father was born here and I inherit
 His fame, a chain he bound his son
 with, —

Could I pay in a lump I should prefer it,
 But there's no mine to blow up and
 get done with,

So I must stay till the end of the
 chapter :

For, as to our middle-age-manners
 adapter,

Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,
 One day or other, his head in a morion,
 And breast in a hauberk, his heels
 he'll kick up

Slain by some onslaught fierce of
 hiccup.

And then, when red doth the sword
 of our Duke rust,

And its leathern sheath lies o'ergrown
 with a blue crust,

Then, I shall scrape together my earn-
 ings ;

For, you see, in the Churchyard
 Jacynth reposes,

And our children all went the way of
 the roses—

It's a long lane that knows no turn
 ings—

One needs but little tackle to travel in,
 So, just one stout cloak shall I indue,

And for a staff, what be it the javelin
 With which his boars my father

pinned you ?
 And then, for a purpose you shall
 hear presently,

Taking some Cotnar, a tig' : plump
 skinfull,

I shall go journeying, who but I,
 pleasantly ?

Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.
 What's a man's age ? He must hurry

more, that's all :
 Cram in a day, what his youth took a
 year to hold ;

When we mind labour, then only,
 we're too old—

What age had Methusalem when he
 begat Saul ?

And at last, as its haven some buffeted
 ship sees,
 (Come all the way from the north-
 parts with sperm oil)
 I shall get safely out of the turmoil
 And arrive one day at the land of the
 gypsies
 And find my lady, or hear the last
 news of her
 From some old thiet and son of
 Lucifer,
 His forehead chapletted green with
 wreathy hop,
 Sunburned all over like an Æthiop:
 And when my Cotnar begins to
 operate
 And the tongue of the rogue to run at
 a proper rate,
 And our wine-skin, tight once, shows
 each flaccid dent,
 I shall drop in with--as if by acci-
 dent--
 "You never knew then, how it all
 ended,
 "What fortunes good or bad attended
 "The little lady your Queen be-
 friended?"
 --And when that's told me, what's
 remaining?

This world's too hard for my explain-
 ing -
 The same wise judge of matters equine
 Who still preferred some slim four-
 year-old
 To the big-boned stock of mighty
 Berold,
 And for strong Cotnar drank French
 weak wine,
 He also must be such a Lady's
 scorner!
 Smooth Jacob still robs homely
 Esau,
 Now up, now down, the world's one
 see-saw!
 So, I shall find out some snug
 corner
 Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-
 knight,
 Turn myself round and bid the world
 good-night;
 And sleep a sound sleep till the trum-
 pet's blowing
 Wakes me (unless priests cheat us lay-
 men)
 To a world where's to be no further
 throwing
 Pearls before swine that can't value
 them. Amen!

EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES

FAME

SEE, as the prettiest graves will do in time,	Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry,
Our poet's wants the freshness of its prize ;	Wanting the brick-work promised by- and-by ;
Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods	How the minute grey lichens, plate o'er plate,
Have struggled thro' its binding osier- rods ;	Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date !

LOVE

So, the year's done with ! (<i>Love me for ever !</i>)	May-wreaths that bound me June needs must sever !
All March begun with, April's endeavour ;	Now snows fall round me, (Quenching June's fever— (<i>Love me for ever !</i>))

SONG

I.

NAY but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mis-
tress ?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—
above her ?
Aught like this tress, see, and this
tress,
And this last fairest tress of all.
So fair, see, ere I let it fall ?

II.

Because, you spend your lives in
praising ;
To praise, you search the wide
world over ;
So, why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught—speak truth
above her ?
Above this tress, and this I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much !

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon, and night,
"Praise God," sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
By which the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell:

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, "Praise God."

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk,
"Well done:

"I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice to-day

"Were praising God, the Pope's great
way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
"Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
"Might praise Him, that great way,
and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures always,
A thousand years are but a day

God said in Heaven. "Nor day nor
night

"Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman
well;

And morning, evening, noon, and
night,

Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear:
"There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
"New worlds that from my footstool
go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
"I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off
fell

The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery.

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope. Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his
trade,

Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew
near,

An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood
here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's
cell,

"And set thee here ; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel's-sphere,

"Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it
dropped—

"Creation's chorus stopped !

"Go back and praise again

"The early way—while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,

"Take up Creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ ;

"Become the craftsman and the boy !"

Theocrite grew old at home ;

A new Pope dwelt in Peter's Dome.

One vanished as the other died :

They sought God side by side.

MEETING AT NIGHT

I.

THE grey sea and the long black
land ;
And the yellow half-moon large and
low ;
And the startled little waves that
leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing
prow,
And quench its speed in the slushy
sand.

II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented
beach ;
Three fields to cross till a farm
appears ;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp
scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys
and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to
each !

PARTING AT MORNING

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the
sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's
rim—

And straight was a path of gold for
him,
And the need of a world of men for
me.

SAUL

SAID Abner, "At last thou art come!

"Ere I tell, ere thou speak.

"Kiss my cheek, wish me well!"

Then I wished it,

And did kiss his cheek:

And he, "Since the King, oh my friend,

"For thy countenance sent,

Nor drunken nor eaten have we;

Nor, until from his tent

Thou return with the joyful assurance

The king liveth yet,

Shall our lip with the honey be
brightened,

—The water, be wet.

"For out of the black mid-tent's
silence,

A space of three days,

No sound hath escaped to thy servants,

Of prayer nor of praise,

To betoken that Saul and the Spirit

Have ended their strife,

And that faint in his triumph the
monarch

Sinks back upon life.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved!

God's child, with his dew

On thy gracious gold hair, and those
lilies

Still living and blue

As thou brak'st them to twine round
thy harp-strings,

As if no wild heat

Were raging to torture the desert!"

Then I, as was meet,

Knelt down to the God of my fathers,

And rose on my feet,

And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder,

The tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed,

And under I stooped;

Hands and knees o'er the slipper;
mass-patch

All withered and gone

That leads to the second enclosure,

I groped my way on,

Till I felt where the foldskirts fly
open;

Then once more I prayed,

And opened the foldskirts and en-
tered,

And was not afraid;

And spoke, "Here is David, thy
servant!"

And no voice replied;

And first I saw nought but the black-
ness;

But soon I descried

A something more black than the
blackness

The vast, the upright

Main-prop which sustains the pavi-
lion,

And slow into sight

Grew a figure, gigantic, against it,

And blackest of all;

Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the
tent-roof,

Showed Saul.

He stood as erect as that tent-
prop;

Both arms stretched out wide

On the great cross-support in the
centre

That goes to each side:

So he bent not a muscle, but hung
there

As, caught in his pangs

And waiting his change, the king-
serpent

All heavily hanging,

Far away from his kind, in the pine,

Till deliverance come

With the Spring-time,—so agonised
Saul.

Drear and stark, blind and dumb.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off
the lilies

We twine round its chords

Lest they snap 'neath the stress of
the noontide

—Those sunbeams like swords!

And I first played the tune all our
sheep know,

As, one after one,

So docile they come to the pen-door

Till folding he done;

—They are white and untorn by the
bushes,

For lo, they have fed

Where the long grasses stifle the
water

Within the stream's bed:

Now one after one seeks its lodg-
ing,

As star follows star

Into eve and the blue far above us,

—So blue and so far!

Then the tune for which quails on
the cornland

Will leave each his mate

To follow the player; then, what
makes

The crickets clate

Till for boldness they fight one an-
other:

And then, what has weight

To set the quick jerboa a-musing

Outside his sand house

—There are none such as he for a
wonder—

Half bird and half mouse!

—God made all the creatures and
gave them

Our love and our fear,

To show, we and they are his children,

One family here.

Then I played the help-tune of our
reapers,

Their wine-song, when hand

Grasps hand, eye lights eye in good
friendship.

And great hearts expand,

And grow one in the sense of this
world's life;

And then, the low song

When the dead man is praised on his
journey

“Bear, bear him along

“With his few faults shut up like
dead flowrets;

“Are balm-seeds not here

“To console us? The land is left
none such

“As he on the bier—

“Oh, would we might keep thee, my
brother!”

And then, the glad chaunt

Of the marriage,—first go the young
maidens.

Next, she whom we vaunt

As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling:

And then, the great march

When man runs to man to assist him,

And buttress an arch

Nought can break . . . who shall
harm them, our friends?

Then, the chorus intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar

In glory enthroned—

But I stopped here—for here, in the
darkness,

Saul groaned.

And I paused, held my breath in such
silence!

And listened apart;

And the tent shook, for mighty Saul
shuddered,—

And sparkles 'gan dart

From the jewels that woke in his turban

—At once with a start

All its lordly male-sapphires, and
rubies

Courageous at heart;

So the head—but the body still moved
not.

Still hung there erect.

And I bent once again to my playing,

Pursued it unchecked.

As I sang, “Oh, our manhood's prime
vigour!

--No spirit feels waste.

No muscle is stopped in its playing,

No sinew unbraced;—

And the wild joys of living ! The
 leaping
 From rock up to rock—
 The rending their boughs from the
 palm-trees,
 The cool silver shock
 Of a plunge in the pool's living water—
 The haunt of the bear,
 And the sultriness showing the lion
 Is couched in his lair :
 And the meal—the rich dates—
 lowed over
 With gold dust divine,
 And the locust's-flesh steeped in the
 pitcher,
 The full draught of wine,
 And the sleep in the dried river
 channel
 Where tall rushes tell
 The water was wont to go warbling
 So softly and well,—
 How good is man's life here, mere
 living !
 How fit to employ
 The heart and the soul and the senses
 For ever in joy !
 Hast thou loved the white locks of
 thy father
 Whose sword thou didst guard
 When he trusted thee forth to the wolf
 hunt
 For glorious reward ?
 Didst thou see the thin hands of thy
 mother
 Held up, as men sung

The song of the nearly-departed,
 And heard her faint tongue
 Joining in while it could to the witness
 "Let one more attest,
 "I have lived, seen God's hand thro'
 that life-time,
 "And all was for best . . ."
 Then they sung thro' their tears, in
 strong triumph,
 Not much,—but the rest !
 And thy brothers—the help and the
 contest
 The working whence grew
 Such result, as from seething grape-
 bundles
 The spirit so true :
 And the friends of thy boyhood—that
 boyhood
 With wonder and hope,
 Present promise, and wealth in the
 future,
 The eye's eagle scope,—
 Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch.
 A people is thine !
 Oh all gifts the world offers singly,
 On one head combine,
 On one head the joy and the pride,
 Even rage like the throe
 That opes the rock, helps its glad
 labour,
 And lets the gold go—
 And ambition that sees a sun lead it—
 Oh, all of these—all
 Combine to unite in one creature
 —Saul !

TIME'S REVENGES

I'VE a Friend, over the sea :
 I like him, but he loves me ;
 It all grew out of the books I write ;
 They find such favour in his sight
 That he slaughters you with savage
 looks
 Because you don't admire my books :
 He does himself though,—and if some
 vein
 Were to snap to-night in this heavy
 brain,
 To-morrow month, if I lived to try,
 Round should I just turn quietly,
 Or out of the bedclothes stretch my
 hand
 Till I found him, come from his
 foreign land
 To be my nurse in this poor place,
 And make me broth, and wash my face,
 And light my fire, and, all the while,
 Bear with his old good-humoured
 smile
 That I told him " Better have kept
 away
 " Than come and kill me, night and
 day,
 " With worse than fever's throbs and
 shoots,
 " At the creaking of his clumsy boots."
 I am as sure that this he would do,
 As that Saint Paul's is striking Two :
 And I think I had rather . . . woe
 is me !
 —Yes, rather see him than not see,
 If lifting a hand would seat him there
 Before me in the empty chair
 To-night, when my head aches indeed,
 And I can neither think, nor read,
 And these blue fingers will not hold
 The pen ; this garret's freezing cold !

And I've a Lady—There he wakes.
 The laughing fiend and prince of
 snakes

Within me, at her name, to pray
 Fate send some creature in the way
 Of my love for her, to be down-torn
 Upthrust and onward borne
 So I might prove myself that sea
 Of passion which I needs must be !
 Call my thoughts false and my fancies
 quaint,
 And my style infirm, and its figures
 faint,
 All the critics say, and more blame
 yet,
 And not one angry word you get !
 But, please you, wonder I would
 put
 My cheek beneath that Lady's foot
 Rather than trample under mine
 The laurels of the Florentine,
 And you shall see how the Devil
 spends
 A fire God gave for other ends !
 I tell you, I stride up and down
 This garret, crowned with love's best
 crown,
 And feasted with love's perfect feast,
 To think I kill for her, at least,
 Body and soul and peace and fame,
 Alike youth's end and manhood's
 aim,
 —So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,
 Filled full, eaten out and in
 With the face of her, the eyes of her,
 The lips and little chin, the stir
 Of shadow round her mouth ; and she
 —I'll tell you,—calmly would decree
 That I should roast at a slow fire,
 If that would compass her desire
 And make her one whom they invite
 To the famous ball to-morrow night.

There may be Heaven ; there must
 be Hell ;
 Meantime, there is our Earth here—
 well !

THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King Francis.

"Distance all value enhance !

"When a man's busy, why, leisure

"Strikes him as wonderful pleasure,

"Faith, and at leisure once is he ?

"Straightway he wants to be busy.

"Here we've got peace ; and aghast I'm

"Caught thinking war the true pastime !

"Is there a reason in metre ?

"Give us your speech, master Peter !"

I who, if mortal dare say so,

Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,

"Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloud-lets :

"Men are the merest Ixions"—

Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's

"... Heigho... go look at our Mons !"

Such are the sorrowful chances

If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding,

Our company, Francis was leading,

Increased by new followers tenfold

Before he arrived at the penfold ;

Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen

At sunset the western horizon.

And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost

With the dame he professed to adore most—

Oh, what a face ! One by fits eyed

Her, and the horrible pitside ;

For the penfold surrounded a hollow

Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,

And shelved to the chamber secluded
Where Bluebeard, the great lion,
brooded.

The King hailed his keeper, an Arab
As glossy and black as a scarab,

And bade him make sport and at once stir

Up and out of his den the old monster.
They opened a hole in the wire-work

Across it, and dropped there a fire-work,

And fled ; one's heart's beating redoubled ;

A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,

The blackness and silence so utter,
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter ;

Then earth in a sudden contortion
Gave out to our gaze her abortion !

Such a brute ! Were I friend Clement Marot

(Whose experience of nature's but narrow,

And whose faculties move in no small mist

When he versifies David the Psalmist)
I should study that brute to describe

you

Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu !

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy

To see the black mane, vast and heapy,

The tail in the air stiff and straining.

The wide eyes, not waxing nor waning,

As over the barrier which bounded

His platform, and us who surrounded

The barrier, they reached and they rested

On the space that might stand him in best stead:

For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,

The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,

And if, in this minute of wonder,

No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder,

Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,

The lion at last was delivered?

Ay, that was the open sky o'er-head!

And you saw by the flash on his forehead,

By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,

He was leagues in the desert already,

Driving the flocks up the mountain,

Or cat-like couched hard by the fountain

To waylay the date-gathering negress:

So guarded he entrance or egress.

"How he stands!" quoth the King:

"we may well swear,

"No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere,

"And so can afford the confession,

"We exercise wholesome discretion

"In keeping aloof from his thresh-old;

"Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,

"Their first would too pleasantly parloin

"The visitor's brisket or surloin:

"But who's he would prove so fool-hardy?

Not the best man of Marignan, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,

Than over the rails a glove fluttered.

Fell close to the lion, and rested:

The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested

With life so. De Lorge had been woo-

ing

For months past; he sate there pur-

suing

His suit, weighing out with nonchal-

ance

Fine speeches like gold from a bal-

ance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's

a barrier!

De Lorge made one leap at the

barrier,

Walked straight to the glove, -while

the lion

Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching

eye on

The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's

sapphire,

And the musky oiled skin of the

Kafir,

Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,

Leaped back where the lady was

seated,

And full in the face of its owner

Flung the glove

"Your heart's queen, you de-

throne her?

"So should I"—cried the King—

"'twas mere vanity,

"Not love, set that task to humanity!"

Lords and ladies alike turned with

loathing

From such a proved wolf in sheep's

clothing.

Not so, I; for I caught an expres-

sion

In her brow's undisturbed self-pos-

session

Amid the Court's scoffing and merri-

ment,

As if from no pleasing experiment

She rose, yet of pain not much heed-

ful

So long as the process was needful-

As if she had tried in a crucible,

For what "speeches like gold" were

reducible.

And, finding the finest prove copper,

Felt the smoke in her face was but

proper;

To know what she had *not* to trust to,

Was worth all the ashes, and dust

too.

She went out 'mid hooting and laughter
 Clement Marot stayed; I followed after,
 And asked, as a grace, what it all meant
 If she wished not the rash deed's recalcement?
 "For I" so I spoke—"am a Poet:
 "Human nature,—behoves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard
 "Of the deed proved alone by the word:

"For my love,—what De Lorge would not dare!

"With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare!

"And the endless descriptions of death

"He would brave when my lip formed a breath,

"I must reckon as braved, or, of course,

"Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,

"For such gifts as no lady could spurn,

"Must offer my love in return.

"When I looked on your lion, it brought

"All the dangers at once to my thought,

"Encountered by all sorts of men,

"Before he was lodged in his den.

"From the poor slave whose club or bare hands

"Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,

"With no King and no Court to applaud,

"By no shame, should he shrink, over-awed,

"Yet to capture the creature made shift,

"That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,

"To the page who had leaped o'er the fence

"Of the pit, on no greater pretence

"Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,

"Lest his pay for a week should be stopped

"So, wiser I judged it to make

"One trial what 'death for my sake'

"Really meant, while the power was yet mine,

"Than to wait until time should define

"Such a phrase not so simply as I,

"Who took it to mean just 'o die,'

"The blow a glove gives is but weak

"Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?

"But when the heart suffers a blow.

"Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,

And saw a youth eagerly keeping

As close as he dared to the doorway:

No doubt that a noble should more weigh

His life than befits a plebeian;

And yet, had our brute been Nemean

I judge by a certain calm fervour

The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)

He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn

If you whispered "Friend, what you'd get, first earn!"

And when, shortly after, she carried

Her shame from the Court, and they married,

To that marriage some happiness, maugre

The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,

Those in wonder and praise, these in envy:

And in short stood so plain a head taller

That he wooed and won . . . How do you call her?

The beauty, that rose in the sequel
To the King's love, who loved her a
week well ;

And 'twas noticed he never would
honour

De Lorge (who looked daggers upon
her)

With the easy commission of stretch-
ing

His legs in the service, and fetching
His wife, from her chamber, those

straying

Sad gloves she was always mislay-
ing,

While the King took the closet to
chat in,

But of course this adventure came pat
in :

And never the King told the story,
How bringing a glove brought such
glory.

But the wife smiled - "His nerves are
grown firmer

"Mine he brings now and utters no
murmur !"

Veniunt occurrere morbo !

With which moral I drop my theorbo.

NATIONALITY IN DRINKS

I.

My heart sunk with our Claret-flask,
Just now, beneath the heavy sedges
That serve this pond's black face for
mask ;
And still at yonder broken edges
Of the hole, where up the bubbles
glisten,
After my heart I look and listen.

II.

Our laughing little flask, compell'd
Thro' depth to depth more bleak
and shady ;
As when, both arms beside her held,
Feet straightened out, some gay
French lady
Is caught up from Life's light and
motion,
And dropped into Death's silent ocean!

Up jumped Tokay on our table,
Like a pygmy castle-warder,
Dwartish to see, but stout and able,
Arms and accoutrements all in order ;
And fierce he looked north, then
wheeling south,
Blew with his bugle a challenge to
Drouth,
Cocked his flap-hat with the tosspot-
feather,
Twisted his thumb in his red
moustache,
Jingled his huge brass spurs together,
Tightened his waist with its Buda sash,

And then with an impudence nought
could abash,
Shrugged his hump-shoulder,
To tell the beholder,
For twenty such knaves he should
laugh but the holder,
And so with his sword-hilt gallantly
jutting,
And dexter-hand on his haunch
abutting,
Went the little man from Ausbruch,
strutting !

III.

Here's to Nelson's memory !
'Tis the second time that I, at sea,
Right off Cape Trafalgar here,
Have drunk it deep in British beer :
Nelson for ever—any time
Am I his to command in prose or
rhyme !
Give me of Nelson only a touch,
And I guard it, be it little or much ;
Here's one the Captain gives, and so
Down at the word, by George, shall it
go !
He says that at Greenwich they show
the beholder
Nelson's coat, "still with tar on the
shoulder,
"For he used to lean with one
shoulder digging,
"Jigging, as it were, and zig-zag-
zigging,
"Up against the mizen rigging !"

THE TWINS.

"Give" and "It-shall-be-given-unto-you."

I.

GRAND rough old Martin Luther
Bloomed fables—flowers on furze,
The better the uncouthier:
Do roses stick like burrs?

II.

A beggar asked an alms
One day at an abbey door.
Said Luther; but, seized with qualms,
The Abbot replied, "We're poor!"

III.

"Poor, who had plenty once,
"When gifts fell thick as rain;
"But they give us nought, for then once,
"And how should we give again?"

IV.

Then the beggar, "See your sins!
"Of old, unless I err.
"Ye had brothers for inmates, twins,
"DATE and DABITUR."

V.

"While DATE was in good case
"DABITUR flourished too:
"For DABITUR's lenten face,
"No wonder if DATE rue."

VI.

"Would ye retrieve the one?
"Try and make plump the other
"When DATE's penance is done,
"DABITUR joins his brother."

VII.

"Only, beware relapse!"
The Abbot hung his head.
This beggar might be, perhaps,
An angel, Luther said.

ROBERT BROWNING

ROME, *March 30th*, 1854.

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

A TRAGEDY

PERSONS

The Grand-Master's Prefect.
 The Patriarch's Nuncio.
 The Republic's Admiral.
 LOYS DE DREUX, Knight-Novice.
 Initiated Druses—DJABAL, KHALIL,
 ANAEL, MAANI, KARSHOOK,
 RAGHIB, AYOOB, and others.
 Uninitiated Druses.
 Prefect's Guard, Nuncio's Attendants, Admiral's Force.

TIME, 14—.

PLACE—An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonised by Druses of Lebanon,
 and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.

SCENE—A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.

ACT I

Enter stealthily KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, and other initiated Druses, each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a shout to exultation,—

Kar. The moon is carried off in
 purple fire :
 Day breaks at last ! Break glory,
 with the day,
 On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery
 Now ready to resume its pristine shape
 Of Hakeem, as the Khalif vanished erst
 In what seemed death to uninstructed
 eyes,
 On red Mokattam's verge —our
 Founder's flesh,
 As he resumes our Founder's function !
Ragh. —Death

Sweep to the Christian Prefect that
 enslaved
 So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea !
Ly. —Most joy be thine, O Mother-
 mount ! Thy brood
 Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left,
 But thus—but thus ! Behind, our
 Prefect's corse ;
 Before, a presence like the morning
 —thine,
 Absolute Djabal late,—God Hakeem
 now
 That day breaks !
Kar. Off then, with dis-
 guise at last !
 As from our forms this hateful garb
 we strip,
 Lose every tongue its glozing accent
 too,
 Discard each limb the ignoble gesture !
 Cry,
 'Tis the Druse Nation, warders on
 our mount

Of the world's secret, since the birth
 of time,
 No kindred ships, no offsets from
 thy stock,
 No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we
 Who rise . . .
Ay. Who shout . . .
Ragh. Who seize, a
 first-fruits, ha
 Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!
[They begin to tear down, and to
dispute the locations of
the ill.]
Kar. Hold!
Ay. -Mine, I say:
 And mine shall it continue!
Kar. Just this fringe!
 Take anything besides! Lo, spire on
 spire,
 Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to
 the top
 Of the roof, and hide themselves
 mysteriously
 Among the twinkling lights and darks
 that haunt
 Yon cornice! Where the huge veil,
 they suspend
 Before the Prefect's Chamber of de-
 light,
 Floats wide, then falls again (as if its
 slave,
 The scented air, took heart now, and
 anon
 Lost heart, to buoy its breadths of
 gorgeousness
 Above the gloom they droop in) -all
 the porch
 Is jewelled o'er with frost-work
 character;
 And see yon eight-point cross of white
 flame, winking
 How silvery like some fresh-broke
 marble-stone:
 Raze out the Rhodian's Cross there,
 so thou leav'st me
 This single fringe!
Ay. Ha, wouldst thou,
 dog-fox? Help!
 -Three handbreadths of gold fringe,
 my son was set
 To twist, the night he died!

Kar. Nay, hear the knave!
 And I could witness my one daughter
 borne,
 A week since, to the Prefect's couch,
 yet fold
 These arms, be mute, lest word of
 mine should mar
 Our Master's work, delay the Prefect
 here
 A day, prevent his sailing hence for
 Rhodes
 How know I else? - Hear me denied
 my right
 By such a knave!
Ragh. *[Interposing.]* Each ravage
 for himself!
 Booty enough! On, Druses! Be
 there found
 Blood and a heap behind us; with us,
 Djabal
 Turned Hakeem; and before us,
 Lebanon!
 Yields the porch? Spare not! There
 his minions dragged
 Thy daughter, Karshook, to the
 Prefect's couch!
 Ayooob! Thy son, to soothe the
 Prefect's pride,
 Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat
 on his brow,
 Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-
 work there!
 Onward in Djabal's name!

As the tumult is at height, enter
KHALIL. A pause and silence.

Kha. Was it for this,
 Djabal hath summoned you? Deserve
 you thus
 A portion in to-day's event? What,
 here—
 When most behoves your feet fall
 soft, your eyes
 Sink low, your tongues lie still,—at
 Djabal's side,
 Close in his very hearing, who, per-
 chance,
 Assumes e'en now God Hakeem's
 dreaded shape,—
 Dispute you for these gauds?
Ay. How say'st thou, Khalil?

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

103

Doubtless our Master prompts thee !
 Take the fillet,
 Old Karhood ! I disposed it with a
 day.
Kha. For pillage ?
Kar. Hearken, Khalil !
 Never spoke
 A boy so like a song-bird ; we avouch
 thee
 Prettiest of all our Master's instru-
 ments
 Except thy bright twin-sister—thou
 and Anael
 Challenge his prime regard : but we
 may crave
 (Such nothings as we be) a portion too
 Of Djabal's favour ; in him we be-
 lieved.
 His bound ourselves, him moon by
 moon obeyed,
 Kept silence till this daybreak—so
 may claim
 Reward : who grudges me my claim ?
Ay. To-day
 Is not as yesterday !
Kagh. Stand off !
Kha. Rebel you ?
 Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw
 His wrath on you, the day of our
 Return ?
Other Druses. Wrench from their
 grasp the fringe !
 Hound ! must the earth
 Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee ?—
 and thee ?
 Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault !
Kha. Oh, shame !
 Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic
 tribe
 Who, flying the approach of Osman,
 bore
 Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's
 Ridge
 Its birth-place, hither ! Let the sea
 divide
 These hunters from their prey, you
 said, and safe
 In this dim islet's virgin solitude
 Tend we our faith, the spark, till
 happier time
 Fan it to fire ; till Hakeem rise again,
 According to his word that, in the flesh

Which faded on Mokattam ages since.
 He, at our extreme need, would inter-
 pose,
 And, reinstating all in power and bli-
 ss, lead us himself to Lebanon once more.
 Was't not thus you departed years ago,
 Ere I was born ?
Druses. 'Twas even thus,
 years ago.
Ay. And did you call—(according
 to old Laws
 Which bid us, lest the Sacred grow
 Profane,
 Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
 With strangers fortune makes our
 lords, and live
 As Christian with the Christian, Jew
 with Jew,
 Druse only with the Druses) did you
 call
 Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's
 rage,
 (Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the
 sea
 The remnant of your tribe) a race
 self-vowed
 To endless warfare with his hordes
 and him,
 The White-cross Knights of the ad-
 jacent Isle ?
Kar. And why else rend we down,
 wrench up, raze out ?
 These Knights of Rhodes we thus
 solicited
 For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest
 Than aught we fled—their Prefect ;
 who began
 His promised mere paternal gover-
 nance,
 By a prompt massacre of all our
 Sheikhs
 Able to thwart the Order in its scheme
 Of crushing, with our nationalities,
 Each chance of our return, and turning
 us
 Bond slaves to Rhodes for ever—all,
 he thinks
 To end by this day's treason.
Aha. Say I not ?
 You, fitted to the Order's purposes,
 Your Sheikhs cut off, your very garb
 proscribed,

Must yet receive one degradation
 more ;
 The Knights at last throw off the mask
 transfer,
 As tributary now, and appanage,
 This islet they are but protectors of,
 To their own ever-craving lord, the
 Church,
 Which licenses all crimes that pay it
 thus
 You, from their Prefect, were to be
 consigned
 Pursuant to I know not what vile
 pact,
 To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to
 outvie
 His predecessor in all wickedness ;
 When suddenly rose Djabal in the
 midst,
 Djabal, the man, in semblance, but
 our God
 Confessed by signs and portents, Ye
 saw fire
 Bicker round Djabal, heard strange
 music flit
 Bird-like about his brow ?
Druses. We saw -
 we heard !
 Djabal is Hakeem, the incarnate
 Dread,
 The phantasm Khalif, King of Pro-
 dige !
K'za. And as he said hath not our
 Khalif done,
 And so disposed events (from land to
 land
 Passing invisibly) that when, this
 morn.
 The pact of villainy complete, there
 comes
 This Patriarch's Nuncio with this
 Master's Prefect
 Their treason to consummate, each
 will face
 For a crouching handful, an uplifted
 nation ;
 For simulated Christians, confessed
 Druses ;
 And, for slaves past hope of the
 Mother-mountain.
 Freedmen returning there 'neath
 Venice' flag ;

That Venice, which, the Hospitallers'
 foe,
 Grants us from Candia escort home
 at price
 Of our relinquished isle -- Rhode,
 counts her own --
 Venice, whose promised argosie
 should stand
 Toward the harbour : is it now that
 you, and you,
 And you, selected from the rest to bear
 The burthen of the Khalif's secret,
 further
 To-day's event, entitled by your
 wrongs,
 And witness in the Prefect's hall his
 fate -
 That you dare clutch these gauds ?
 Ay, drop them !
K'ar. True,
 Most true, all this ; and yet, may one
 dare hint,
 Thou art the youngest of us ? -- tho'
 employed
 Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,
 Transmitter of his mandates, even
 now :
 Much less, when'er beside him Anael
 graces
 The cedar throne, his Queen-bride,
 art thou like
 To occupy its lowest step that day !
 Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as
 thou aspirest,
 Forbidden such or such an honour, --
 say,
 Would silence serve so amply ?
K'za. Karshook thinks
 I covet honours ? Well, nor idly thinks !
 Honours ? I have demanded of them
 all
 The greatest !
K'ar. I supposed so.
K'za. Judge yourselves !
 Turn thus : 'tis in the alcove at the
 back
 Of yonder columned porch, whose
 entrance now
 The veil hides, that our Prefect holds
 his state :
 Receives the Nuncio, when the one,
 from Rhodes,

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

405

The other lands from Syria: then
they meet.

Now, I have sued with earnest
prayers . . .

Kar. For what
hall the Bride's brother vainly sue?

Kha. That mine
Avenging in one blow a myriad

wrongs,
Might be the hand to slay the

Prefect there!
Djabal reserves that office for himself.

[*Enter Loys.*]
Thus far, as you . . . of you all, I

spoke,
—Scarce more enlightened than you

selves: since, near
As I approach him, nearer and I

trust
Soon to approach our Master, he re-

veals
Only the God's power, not the glory

yet:
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, I

as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,

Hear me appoint your several posts:
Till noon

None sees him save myself and Anael
once

The deed achieved, our Khalil, . . .
ing off

The embodied Awe's tremor is
mystery,

The weakness of the flesh disguises,
resumes

His proper glory, ne'er to fade again.
Enter a Druse.

The Druse. Our Prefect lands from
Rhodes! Without a sign

That he suspects aught since he left
our Isle;

Nor in his train a single guard beyond
The few he sailed with hence: so

have we learned
From Loys . . .

Kar. Loys? Is not Loys
come

never?
Ayoob. Loys, the Frank Knight,
returned:

Loys. Loys, the Frank Knight,
on the landing!

Conspicuous in his attire, and
light

Into the surf the foremost: since day
dawn

I kept watch to the Northward: too
late for

Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!
Kha. Peace!

Thou, Karshook, with thy company,
receive

The Prefect as appointed: see, all
keep

The wonted show of servitude: an-
nounce

His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further

pleasure
Of Djabal! (*Loys back, whom Djabal*

sent
To Rhodes that we might spare the

single Knight
Worth sparing!)

Enter a Druse.

The Druse. I espied it first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from

the South!
Saidst thou a Crossed-keys' Flag,

would flap the mast?
It bears apiece! One galley and no

more
If Djabal chance to ask who spied

the flag,
Forget not, I it was!

Kha. Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither!

Break
One rule prescribed, ye wather in your

blood,
Die at your task!

Enter a Druse.

The Druse. I shall see home,
see home!

Shall banquet in the sombre groves
again!

Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms
afar!

The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,
Bear up from Candia in the distance!

Kha. Joy! | Despite thy wariness! Will Loys
 Summon our people, Raghib! Bid | stand
 all forth! | And see his comrade slaughtered?
 Tell them the long-lept secret, old | *Loys.* [*Aside.*] How they shrink
 and young! | And whisper, with those rapid faces!
 Set free the captives, let the trampled | What?
 raise | The sight of me in their oppressors'
 Their faces from the dust, because at | gab
 length | Strikes terror to the simple tribe?
 The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's | God's shame
 reign | On those that bring our Order ill
 Begins anew! Say, Venice for our | repute!
 guard, | But all's at end now; better days
 Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear | begin
 you, Druses? | For these mild mountaineers from
 Hear you this crowning witness to the | over-sea;
 claims | The timidest shall have in me no
 Of Djabal? Oh, I spoke of hope and | Prefect
 fear, | To cower at thus! [*Aloud.*] I ask for
 Reward and punishment, because he | Djabal—
 bade | *Kar.* [*Aside.*] Better
 Who has the right; for me, what | One lured him, ere he can suspect,
 should I say | inside
 But, mar not those imperial linea- | The corridor; 'twere easy to despatch
 ments. | A youngster. [*To Loys.*] Djabal
 No majesty of all that rapt regard | passed some minutes since
 Vex by the least omission! Let him | Thro' yonder porch and . . .
 rise | *Kha.* [*Aside.*] Hold! What,
 Without a check from you! | him despatch?
Druses. Let Djabal rise! | The only Christian of them all we
 charge
Enter Loys.—The Druses
are silent.
Loys. Who speaks of Djabal?—for
 I seek him, friends!
 [*Aside.*] *Tu Dieu!* 'Tis as our Isle
 broke out in song
 For joy, its Prefect-incubus drops
 off
 To-day, and I succeed him in his rule!
 But no—they cannot dream of their
 good fortune!
 [*Aloud.*] Peace to you, Druses! I
 have tidings for you,
 But first for Djabal: where's your tall
 bewitcher,
 With that small Arab thin-lipped
 silver mouth?
Kha. [*Aside to KAR.*] Loys, in
 truth! Yet Djabal cannot err!
Kar. [*To KHA.*] And who takes
 charge of Loys? That's forgotten, |

Loys. "Intercourse

"With few or none?"—(Ah, Khalil, when you spoke
 I saw not your smooth face! All health!—and health
 To Anael! How fares Anael?)—"Intercourse
 "With few or none?" Forget you, I've been friendly
 With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?
 -Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath
 The Duke my father's roof! He'd tell by the hour,
 With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,
 Plausiblist stories . . .
Kha. Stories, say you?—Ah, The quaint attire!
Loys. My dress for the last time! How sad I cannot make you understand,
 This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces And noblest; and, what's best and oldest there.
 See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio
 Tacks to an Hospitaller's vest to-day!
Kha. The Nuncio we await? What brings you back
 From Rhodes, Sir Loys?
Loys. How you island tribe Forget, the world's awake while here you drowse!
 What brings me back? What should not bring me, rather?
 Our Patriarch's Nuncio visits you to-day—
 Is not my year's probation out? I come
 To take the knightly vows.
Kha. What's that you wear?
Loys. This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect wore.
 You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter
 Rise, to a man, while they transferred this cross
 From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool—
 My secret will escape me!) In a word,

My year's probation's passed, and Knight ere eve
 Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth
 To the common stock, to live in chastity.
 (We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame)
 -Change this gay weed for the black white-crossed gown,
 And fight to death against the Infidel
 -Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with
 Such partial difference only as befits
 The peace fullest of tribes! But Khalil, prithee,
 Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?
Kha. Ah, the new sword!
Loys. See now! You handle sword
 As 'twere a camel-staff! Pull!
 That's my motto,
 Annealed, "*Ivo fide*," on the blade in blue.
Kha. No curve in it? Surely a blade should curve!
Loys. Straight from the wrist! Loose—it should poise itself!
Kha. [*Waving with irrepressible exultation the sword.*]
 We are a nation, Loys, of old fame
 Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep
 With the sword too!
 [*Remembering himself.*] But I forget—you bid me
 Seek Djabal?
Loys. What! A sword's sight scares you not?
 (The People I will make of him and them!
 Oh, let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)
 Bring Djabal—say, indeed, that come he must!
Kha. At noon seek Djabal in the Prefect's Chamber.
 And find—[*Aside.*] Nay, 'tis thy cursed race's token,
 Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!

[*Aloud.*] Tarry and I will do your bidding, Loys.
 [*To the rest aside.*] Now, forth you ! I proceed to Djabal straight.
 Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he says.
 Oh, will it not add joy to even thy joy, Djabal, that I report all friends were true ?
 [KHALIL goes, followed by the Druses.
 Loys. *Tu Dieu !* How happy I shall make these Druses !
 Was't not surpassingly contrived of me
 To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
 Then take the first pretence for stealing off
 From these poor islanders, present myself
 Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
 And (as best proof of ardour in its cause
 Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)
 Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
 This Prefect and his villainous career ?
 The princely Synod ! All I dared request
 Was his dismissal ; and they graciously
 Consigned his very office to myself—
 Myself may heal whate'er's diseased !
 And good
 For them, they did so ! Since I never felt
 How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,
 Till now that, past retrieval, it is mine—
 To live thus, and thus die ! Yet, as I leapt
 On shore, so home a feeling greeted me
 That I could half believe in Djabal's story,
 He used to tempt my father with, at Rennes
 And me, too, since the story brought me here—

Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours
 Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,
 Left his old name in Lebanon.
 Long days
 At least to spend in the Isle ! and, my news known
 An hour hence, what if Anael turns on me
 The great black eyes I must forget ?
 Why, fool,
 Recall them, then ? My business is with Djabal,
 Not Anael ! Djabal tarries : if I seek him ?—
 The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day !

ACT II
Enter DJABAL.
Dja. That a strong man should think himself a God !
 I—Hakeem ? To have wandered thro' the world,
 Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,
 For my one chant with many a change, my tale
 Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance—this
 Required, forsooth, no mere man's faculty,
 Nor less than Hakeem's ? The persuading Loys
 To pass probation here ; the getting access
 By Loys to the Prefect ; worst of all,
 The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud
 That would disgrace the very Franks, —a few
 Of Europe's secrets that subdue the flame,
 The wave, to ply a simple tribe with these,
 Took Hakeem ?
 And I feel this first to-day !
 Does the day break, is the hour imminent

When one deed, when my whole life's
 deed, my deed
 Must be accomplished? Hakeem?
 Why the God?
 Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's
 child, thought slain
 "With his whole race, the Druses'
 Sheikhs, this Prefect
 "Endeavoured to extirpate—saved, a
 child,
 "Returns from traversing the world,
 a man,
 "Able to take revenge, lead back the
 march
 "To Lebanon"—so shout, and who
 gainsays?
 But now, because delusion mixed itself
 Insensibly with this career, all's
 changed!
 Have I brought Venice to afford us
 convoy?
 "True—but my jugglings wrought
 that!" Put I heart
 Into our people where no heart
 lurked?—"Ah,
 "What cannot an impostor do!"
 Not this!
 Not do this which I do! Not bid,
 avault
 Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy
 hold on me!
 —Nor even get a hold on me! 'Tis
 now—
 This day—hour—minute—'tis as here
 I stand
 On the accursed threshold of the
 Prefect,
 That I am found deceiving and de-
 ceived!
 And now what do I?—Hasten to the
 few
 Deceived, ere they deceive the many
 — shout,
 As I professed, I did believe my-
 self!
 Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery—
 If Ayoub, Karshook saw—Maani
 there
 Must tell you how I saw my father
 sink;
 My mother's arms twine still about
 my neck;

I hear my brother's shriek, here's yet
 the scar
 Of what was meant for my own death-
 blow—say,
 If you had woke like me, grown year
 by year
 Out of the tumult in a far-off clime,
 Would it be wondrous such delusion
 grew?
 I walked the world, asked help at
 every hand;
 Came help or no? Not this and this?
 Which helps
 When I returned with, found the
 Prefect here,
 The Druses here, all here but
 Hakeem's self,
 The Khalif of the thousand prophecies,
 Reserved for such a juncture,—could
 I call
 My mission aught but Hakeem's?
 Promised Hakeem
 More than performs the Djabal—you
 absolve?
 —Me, you will never shame before
 the crowd
 Yet happily ignorant? — Me, both
 throngs surround
 The few deceived, the many unabused
 —Who, thus surrounded, slay for you
 and them
 The Prefect, lead to Lebanon! No
 Khalif,
 But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal
 —not. . . .

Enter KHALIL hastily.
A'ha. —God Hakeem!
 'Tis told! The whole Druse nation
 knows thee, Hakeem,
 As we! and mothers lift on high their
 babes
 Who seem aware, so glisten their
 great eyes,
 Thou hast not failed us; ancient
 brows are proud!
 Our Elders could not earlier die, it
 seems,
 Than at thy coming! The Druse
 heart is thine!
 Take it! my Lord and theirs, be thou
 adored!

Dja. [*Aside.*] Adored!—but I renounce it utterly!
K'ha. Already are they instituting choirs
 And dances to the Khalif, as of old
 'Tis chronicled thou had'st them.
Dja. [*Aside.*] I abjure it!
 'Tis not mine—not for me!
K'ha. Why pour they wine
 Flavoured like honey and bruised mountain herbs?
 Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit?
 Oh—let me tell thee—Esaad, we supposed
 Doting, is carried forth, eager to see
 The last sun rise on the Isle—he can see now!
 The shamed Druse women never wept before:
 They can look up when we reach home, they say.
 Smell!—Sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus long—
 Sweet!—it grows wild in Lebanon.
 And I
 Alone do nothing for thee! 'Tis my office
 Just to announce what well thou know'st—but thus
 Thou bidst me. At this selfsame moment tend
 The Prefect, Nuncio, and the Admiral
 Hither, by their three sea-paths—nor forget
 Who were the trusty watchers!—Thou forget?
 Like me, who do forget that Anael bade. . . .
Dja. [*Aside.*] Ay, Anael, Anael—is that said at last?
 Louder than all, that would be said, I knew!
 What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
 To the people? Till that woman crossed my path,
 On went I, solely for my people's sake:
 I saw her, and I first saw too myself,
 And slackened pace: "if I should prove indeed
 Hakeem—with Anael by!"

K'ha. [*Aside.*] Ah, he is rapt!
 Dare I at such a moment break on him
 Even to do my sister's bidding? Yes!
 The eyes are Djabal's, and not Hakeem's yet!
 Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.
Dja. [*Aside.*] To yearn to tell her, and yet have no one
 Great heart's-word that will tell her!
 I could gasp
 Doubtless one such word out, and die!
 [*Loud.*] You said
 That Anael . . .
K'ha. . . . Fain would see thee, speak with thee,
 Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape
 She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know:
 Something's to say that will not from her mind:
 I know not what—"Let him but come!" she said.
Dja. [*Half-apart.*] My nation—all my Druses—how fare they?
 Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,
 Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?
K'ha. All at the signal pant to flock around
 That banner of a brow!
Dja. [*Aside.*] And when they flock,
 Confess them this—and after, for reward,
 Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance?
 —Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind,
 Precede me there—forestall my story, there—
 Tell it in mocks and jeers—
 I lose myself!
 Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?
 I need the veriest child—why not this child?
 [*Turning abruptly to KHALIL.*]

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

411

You are a Druse too, Khalil; you
were nourished
Like Anael with our mysteries: if
she
Could vow, so nourished, to love
only one
Who should revenge the Druses,
whence proceeds
Your silence? Wherefore made you
no essay,
Who thus implicitly can execute
My bidding? What have I done
you could not?
Who, knowing more than Anael the
prostration
Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life
Of this detested . . .
Does he come, you say,
This Prefect? All's in readiness?
Kha. The sword,
The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic
tiar,
Laid up so long, are all disposed
beside
The Prefect's chamber.
Dja. —Why did you despair?
Kha. I know our Nation's state?
Too surely know,
As thou, who speak'st to prove me!
Wrongs like ours
Should wake revenge: but when I
sought the wronged
And spoke,—“The Prefect stabbed
your son—arise!
“Your daughter, while you starve,
eats shameless bread
“In his pavilion—then, arise!”—my
speech
Fell idly—’twas, “Be silent, or worse
fare!
“Endure, till time's slow cycle prove
complete!
“Who may'st thou be that takest on
thee to thrust
“Into this peril—art thou Hakeem?”
No!
Only a mission like thy mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, sub-
dues
Their private passions, brings their
wills to one!
Dja. You think so?

Kha. Even now—when
they have witnessed
Thy miracles—had I not threatened
them
With Hakeem's vengeance, they
would mar the whole,
And lie ere this, each with his special
prize,
Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main
hope
To perish! No! When these have
kissed thy feet
At Lebanon, the Past purged off, the
Present
Clear,—for the Future, even Hak-
eem's mission
May end, and I perchance, or any
youth,
Can rule them thus renewed.—I talk
to thee!
Dja. And wisely. (He is Anael's
brother, pure
As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to
her.
Haste! I will follow you.
[KHALIL goes.
Oh, not confess
To these—the blinded multitude—
confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half authorise its means! Only to
her
Let me confess my fault, who in my
path
Curled up like incense from a mage-
king's tomb
When he would have the wayfarer
descend
Thro' the earth's rift and take hid
treasure up.
When should my first child's-care-
lessness have stopped
If not when I, whose lone youth
hurried past
Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses'
sake,
At length recovered in one Druse all
joys?
Were her brow brighter, her eyes
richer, still
Would I confess! On the gulf's
verge I pause.

How could I slay the Prefect, thus
and thus?

Anael, be mine to guard me, not
destroy! [Goes.]

*Enter ANAEL and MAANI, who is
assisting to array her in the
ancient dress of the Druses.*

An. Those saffron-vestures of the
tabret-girls!

Comes Djabal, think you?

Maa. Doubtless Djabal comes.

An. Dost thou snow-swathe thee
kinglier, Lebanon,

Than in my dreams?—Nay, all the
tresses off

My forehead look I lovely so? He
says

That I am lovely.

Maa. Lovely! nay, that hangs
Awry.

An. You tell me how a khandjar
hangs?

The sharp side, thus, along the heart,
see, marks

The maiden of our class. Are you
content

For Djabal as for me?

Maa. Content, my child.

An. Oh, mother, tell me more of
him. He comes

Even now—tell more, fill up my
soul with him!

Maa. And did I not . . . yes,
surely . . . tell you all?

An. What will be changed in
Djabal when the Change
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!

Maa. 'Tis writ,
Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and
clove the dark

Superbly.

An. Not his eyes! His voice
perhaps?

Yet that's no change; for a grave
current lived

Grandly beneath the surface ever
lived,

That, scattering, broke as in live
silver spray

While . . . ah, the bliss . . . he
would discourse to me

In that enforced, still fashion, word
on word!

'Tis the old current which must swell
thro' that,

For what least tone, Maani, could I
lose?

'Tis surely not his voice will change!
—If Hakeem

Only stood by! If Djabal, some-
how, passed

Out of the radiance as from out a
robe;

Possessed, but was not it!

He lived with you?

Well—and that morning Djabal saw
me first

And heard my vow nevertowed but one
Who saved my People—on that day

. . . proceed!

Maa. Once more, then: from the
time of his return

In secret, changed so since he left
the Isle

That I, who screened our Emir's last
of sons,

This Djabal, from the Prefect's
massacre

Who bade him ne'er forget the
child he was,

—Who dreamed so long the youth he
might become—

I knew not in the man that child;
the man

Who spoke alone of hopes to save our
tribe.

How he had gone from land to land
to save

Our tribe—allies were sure, nor foes
to dread;

And much he mused, days, nights,
alone he mused;

But never till that day when, pale and
worn

As by a persevering woe, he cried
"Is there not one Druse left me?"—

And I showed

The way to Khalil's and your hiding-
place

From the abhorred eye of the Prefect
here,

So that he saw you, heard you speak
—till then,

Never did he announce—(how the moon seemed
To ope and shut, the while, above us both !)
—His mission was the mission promised us—
The cycle had revolved—all things renewing,
He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead
His children home anon, now veiled to work
Great purposes—the Druses now would change.
An. And they have changed ! And obstacles did sink,
And furtherances rose ! And : and his form
Played fire, and music beat her angel wings !
My people, let me more rejoice, oh, more
For you than for myself ! Did I but watch,
Afar the pageant, feel our Khalif pass,
One of the throng, how proud were I—tho' ne'er
Singled by Djabal's glance ! But to be chosen
His own from all, the most his own of all,
To be exalted with him, side by side.
Lead the exalting Druses, meet . . . ah, how
Worthily meet the maidens who await
Ever beneath the cedars—how deserve
This honour, in their eyes ? So bright are they
That saffron vested sound the tabrets there—
The girls who throng there in my dreams ! One hour
And all is over : how shall I do aught
That may deserve next hour's exalting ?—How ?—
[Suddenly to MAANI.]
Mother, I am not worthy of him ! I read it
Still in his eyes ! He stands as if to tell me

I am not, yet forbears ! Why else revert
To one theme ever ?—how mere human gifts
Suffice him in myself—whose worship fades,
Whose awe goes ever off at his approach,
As now, that when he comes . . .
[As DJABAL enters.] Oh, why is it,
I cannot kneel to you ?
Dja. Rather, 'tis I
Should kneel to you, my Anael !
An. Even so !
For never seem you—shall I speak the truth ?—
Never a God to me ! 'Tis the Man's hand,
Eye, voice ! Oh, do you veil these to our people,
Or but to me ? To them, I think, to them !
And brightness is their veil, shadow—my truth !
You mean that I should never kneel to you
—So I will kneel !
Dja. *[Preventing her.]* No—no !
[Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.]
Ha, have you chosen . . .
An. The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,
Change not, be not exalted yet ! give time
That I may plan more, perfect more.
My blood
Beats—beats !
[Aside.] O must I then—since Loys leaves us
Never to come again, renew in me
Those doubts so near effaced already—must
I needs confess them now to Djabal ?
—Own
That when I saw that stranger—heard his voice,
My faith fell, and the woeful thought flashed first
That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken
For proof of more than human attributes

In him, by me whose heart at his
 approach
 Beat fast, whose brain while he was
 by swam round,
 Whose soul at his departure died
 away,
 —That every such effect might have
 been wrought
 In others' frames, tho' not in mine.
 by Loys
 Or any merely mortal presence?
 Doubt
 Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?
 How can I be rewarded presently,
 With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed?
Dja. [Aside.] Avow the truth? I
 cannot! In what words
 Avow that all she loves in me is false?
 —Which yet has served that flower-
 like love of hers
 To climb by, like the clinging gourd,
 and clasp
 With its divinest wealth of leaf and
 bloom.
 Could I take down the prop-work, in
 itself
 So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid
 With painted cups and fruitage—
 might these still
 Bask in the sun, unconscious their
 own strength
 Of matted stalk and tendril had re-
 placed
 The old support thus silently with-
 drawn!
 But no; the beauteous fabric crushes
 too.
 'Tis not for my sake but for Anael's
 sake
 I leave her soul this Hakeem where
 it leans!
 Oh, could I vanish from them—quit
 the Isle!
 And yet—a thought comes: here my
 work is done
 At every point; the Druses must
 return—
 I have convoy to their birthplace back,
 whoe'er
 The leader be, myself or any Druse
 Venice is pledged to that: 'tis for
 myself,

For my own vengeance in the Pre-
 fect's death.
 I stay now, not for them—to slay on
 spare
 The Prefect, whom imports it save
 myself?
 He cannot bar their passage from the
 Isle;
 What would his death be but my
 own reward?
 Then, mine I will forego. It is
 foregone!
 Let him escape with all my House's
 blood!
 Ere he can reach land, Djabal dis-
 appears,
 And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall,
 fresh as first,
 Live in her memory, keeping her
 sublime
 Above the world. She cannot touch
 that world
 By ever knowing what I truly am,
 Since Loys,—of mankind the only
 one
 Able to link my present with my past,
 My life in Europe with my Island life,
 Thence, able to unmask me,—I've
 disposed
 Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

Enter KHALIL.

Kha. Loys greets thee!
Dja. Loys? To drag me back?
 It cannot be!
An. [Aside.] Loys! Ah, doubt may
 not be stifled so!
Kha. Can I have erred that thou
 so gazest? Yes,
 I told thee not, in the glad press of
 tidings
 Of higher import, Loys is returned
 Before the Prefect, with, if possible,
 Twice the light-heartedness of old.
 As though
 On some inauguration he expects,
 To-day, the world's fate hung!
Dja. —And asks for me?
Kha. Thou knowest all things!
 Thee in chief he greets,
 But every Druse of us is to be happy
 At his arrival, he declares: were Loys

Thou, Master, he could have no
wider soul
To take us in with. How I love that
Loys!

Dja. [Aside.] Shame winds me with
her tether round and round!

An. [Aside.] Loys? I take the trial!
it is meet,

The little I can do, be done; that
faith,

All I can offer, want no perfecting
Which my own act may compass.

Aye, this way

All may go well, nor that ignoble
doubt

Be chased by other aid than mine.
Advance

Close to my fear, weigh Loys with
my Lord,

The mortal's with the more than
mortal's gifts!

Dja. [Aside.] Before, there were
so few deceived! and now

There's doubtless not one least Druse
in the Isle

But (having learned my superhuman
claims,

And calling me his Khalif-God) will
clash

The whole truth out from Loys at
first word!

While Loys, for his part, will hold
me up,

With a Frank's unimaginable scorn
Of such imposture, to my people's
eyes!

Could I but hold him longer yet awhile
From them, amuse him here until I
plan

How he and I at once may leave the
Isle?

Khalil I cannot part with from my
side—

My only help in this emergency:
There's Anael!

An. Please you?
Dja. (Anael—none but she!)

[To ANAEL.] I pass some minutes in
the chamber there.

Ere I see Loys: you shall speak with
him

Until I join you. Khalil follows me.

An. [Aside.] As I divined: he bids
me save myself.

Offers me a probation— I accept!
Let me see Loys!

Loys. [Without.] Djabal!

An. [Aside.] 'Tis his voice.

The smooth Frank trifler with our
people's wrongs,

The self-complacent boy-inquirer, loud
On this and that inflicted tyranny,

—Aught serving to parade an ignor-
ance

Of how wrong feels, inflicted! Let
me close

With what I viewed at distance; let
myself

Probe this delusion to the core!

Dja. He comes!

Khalil, along with me! while Anael
waits

Till I return once more—and but
once more!

ACT III

ANAEL and LOYS.

An. Here leave me! Here I wait
another. 'Twas

For no mad protestation of a love
Like this you say possesses you, I
came.

Loys. Love—how protest a love I
dare not feel?

Mad words may doubtless have
escaped me—you

Are here—I only feel you here!

An. No more!

Loys. But once again, whom could
you love? I dare,

Alas, say nothing of myself, who am
A Knight now, for when Knighthood

we embrace,

Love we abjure: so speak on safely—
speak,

Lest I speak, and betray my faith so!
Sure

To say your breathing passes thro'
me, changes

My blood to spirit, and my spirit to
you,

As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it—
This is not to protest my love? You
said

You could love one . . .

An. One only! We are bent
To earth—who raises up my tribe, I
love;

The Prefect bows us—who removes
him; we

Have ancient rights—who gives them
back to us,

I love.—Forbear me! Let my hand
go!

Lays.

Him
You could love only? Where is
Djabal? Stay!

[*Aside.*] Yet wherefore stay? Who
does this but myself?

Had I apprised her that I come to do
just this, what more could she ac-
knowledge? No!

She sees into my heart's core: what
is it

Feeds either cheek with red, as June
some rose?

Why turns she from me? Ah fool,
over-fond

To dream I could call up . . .

What never dream
Yet feigned! 'Tis love! Oh Anael,
speak to me!

Djabal!

An. Seek Djabal by the Prefect's
Chamber

At noon! [*She paces the room.*

Lays. [Aside.] And am I not the
Prefect now?

Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept her love? The Past
Breaks up beneath my footing: came
I here

This morn as to a slave, to set her
free

And take her thanks, and then spend
day by day

Content beside her in the Isle? What
works

This knowledge in me now! Her eye
has broken

The faint disguise away: for Anael's
sake

I left the Isle, for her espoused the
cause

Of the Druses, all for her I thought
till now,

To live without!

—As I must live! To-day

Ordains me Knight, forbids me
never shall

Forbid me to profess myself, heart,
arm,

Thy soldier!

An. Djabal you demanded, comes!

Lays. [Aside.] What wouldst thou,
Lays? See him?

Nought beside

I, wanting: I have felt his voice a spell
From first to last. He brought me
here, made known

The Druses to me, drove me hence to
seek

Redress for them; and shall I meet
him now,

When nought is wanting but a word
of his,

To—what?—induce me to spurn hope,
faith, pride,

Honour away,—to cast my lot among
His tribe, become a proverb in men's
mouths,

Breaking my high pact of companion-
ship

With those who graciously bestowed
on me

The very opportunities I turn
Against them.

Let me not see Djabal now!

An. The Prefect also comes!

Lays. [Aside.] Him let me see,
Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a
word,

To please me,—to attest belief in me—
And, after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return

To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have
destroyed

This heart's rebellion, and coerced
this will

For ever.

Anael, not before the vows
Irrevocably fix me . . .

Let me fly!
The Prefect, or I lose myself for
ever!

[*Goes.*

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

417

An. Yes, I am calm now ; just one way remains—

One, to attest my faith in him : for, see,

I were quite lost else : Loys, Djabal, stand

On either side—two men ! I balance looks

And words, give Djabal a man's preference,

No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed !

And for a love like this, the God who saves

My race, selects me for his bride !
One way !—

Enter DJABAL.

Dja. [*To himself.*] No moment is to waste, then ; 'tis resolved !

If Khalil may be trusted to lead back

The Druses, and if Loys can be lured Out of the Isle—if I procure his silence,

Or promise never to return at least,—All's over ! Even now my bark awaits—

I reach the next wild islet and the next,

And lose myself beneath the sun for ever !

And now, to Anael !

An. Djabal, I am thine !

Dja. Mine : Djabal's ?—As if Hakeem had not been ?

An. Not Djabal's ? Say first, do you read my thoughts ?

Why need I speak, if you can read my thoughts ?

Dja. I do not, I have said a thousand times.

An. (My secret's safe, I shall surprise him yet !)

Djabal, I knew your secret from the first—

Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch

You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,

And one fringe fell behind your neck—
—I see !)

. . . I knew you were not human, for I said

“ This dim secluded house where the sea beats

Is Heaven to me— my people's huts are Hell

To them ; this august form will follow me,

Mix with the waves his voice will, I have him ;

And they, the Prefect ; Oh, my happiness

Rounds to the full whether I choose or no !

His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,

His hand grew damp—surely he meant to say

He let me love him : in that moment's bliss

I shall forget my people pine for home—

They pass and they repass with pallid eyes !”

I vowed at once a certain vow ; this vow—

Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved.

Embrace me !

Dja. [*1 part.*] And she loved me ! Nought remained

But that ! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead ?

An. Ah, you reproach me ! True, his death crowns all,

I know—or should know—and I would do much,

Believe ! but, death—Oh, you, who have known death,

Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful

As we report !

Death !—a fire curls within us From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain,

Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell

Of flesh, perchance !

Death !—witness, I would die. Whate'er death be, would venture to die

to die

For Khalil—for Maani—what for thee ?

Nay but embrace me, Djabal, in
 assurance

My vow will not be broken, for I
 must

Do something to attest my faith in
 you,

Be worthy of you!

Dja. [*avoiding her.*] I come for
 that—to save

Such an occasion is at hand: 'tis
 like

I leave you—that we part, my Anael,
 part

For ever!

An. We part? Just so! I have
 succumbed,

I am, he thinks, unworthy—and
 nought less

Will serve than such approval of my
 faith!

Then, we part not! Remains there
 no way short

Of that? Oh, not that!

Death!—Yet a hurt bird
 Died in my hands—its eyes filmed

“Nay it sleeps”

I said, “will wake to-morrow well”
 —’twas dead!

Dja. I stand here and time fleets.
 Anael—I come

To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps
 We never meet again—but, ere the

Prefect

Arrive . . .

Enter KHALIL breathlessly.

Kha. He's here! The Prefect!
 Twenty guards,

No more—no sign he dreams of
 danger—all

Awaits thee only—Ayoob, Karshook,
 keep

Their posts—wait but the deed's ac-
 complishment

To join us with thy Druses to a man!
 Still holds his course the Nuncio—

near and near

The fleet from Candia's steering!

Dja. [*Aside.*] All is lost!
 —Or won?

Kha. And I have laid the sacred
 robes,

The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch—
 —the place

Commanded—Thou wilt hear the Pre-
 fect's trumpet.

Dja. Then I keep Anael,—him
 then, past recall,

I slay—'tis forced on me! As I began
 I must conclude—so be it!

Kha. For the rest
 Save Loys, our foe's solitary

All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er
 entreat

Thy post again of thee—tho' danger
 none,

There must be glory only meet for
 thee

In slaying the Prefect!

An. [*Aside.*] And 'tis now that
 Djabal

Would leave me!—in the glory meet
 for him!

Dja. As glory, I would yield the
 deed to you,

Or any one; what peril there may be,
 I keep. [*Aside.*] All things conspire

to bound me on!

Not now, my soul, draw back, at
 least! Not now!

The course is plain, howe'er obscure
 all else—

Once offer this tremendous sacrifice,
 Prevent what else will be irrepar-
 able,

Secure these transcendental helps,
 regain

The Cedars—then let all dark clear
 itself!

I slay him!

Kha. Anael, and no part for us!
 [*To Dja.*] Hast thou possessed her

with . . .

Dja. [*To An.*] Whom speak you to?
 What is it you behold there? Nay,

this smile

Turns stranger—shudder you? The
 man must die,

As thousands of our race have died
 thro' him.

One blow, and I discharge his weary
 soul

From the flesh that pollutes it—let him
 fill

straight some new expiatory form, of
earth

Or sea, the reptile, or some aery
thing!

What is there in his death?

An. My brother said,
There no part in it for us?

Dja. For Khalil,
The trumpet will announce the Nunc-
cio's entry;

Here, I shall find the Prefect
hastening

In the Pavilion to receive him—here,
I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayooob
leads

The Nuncio with his guards within
once these

Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayooob bat-
tentry or egress till I give the sign
Which waits the landing of the ar-
gosies

You will announce to me; this double
sign

That justice is performed and help
arrived,

When Ayooob shall receive, but not
before,

Let him throw ope the palace doors,
admit

The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere
We leave for ever this detested spot.

Go, Khalil, hurry all—no pause—no
pause!

Whirl on the dream, secure to wake
anon!

A'ha. What sign? and who the
bearer?

Dja. Who shall show
My ring, admit to Ayooob—How she
stands!

Have I not . . . I must have some
task for her.

Anael! not that way! 'Tis the Pre-
fect's chamber!

Anael, keep you the ring—give you
the sign!

(It holds her safe amid the stir)—You
will

Be faithful?

An. [Taking the ring.] I would fain
be worthy of you!

[Trumpet without.]

A'ha. He comes!

Dja. And I too come!

An. One word, but one!
Say, shall you be exalted at the deed?

Then? On the instant!

Dja. I exalted? What?

He, there—we, thus—our wrongs re-
venged—our tribe—
Set free—Oh, then shall I, assure
yourself,

Shall you, shall each of us, be in his
death

Exalted!

K'ho. He is here!

Dja. Away—away!
[They go]

*Enter the PREFECT with Guards
and LOYS.*

The Prefect. [To Guards.] Back, I
say, to the galley every guard!

That's my sole care now; see each
bench retains

Its complement of rowers; I embark
O' the instant, since this Knight will
have it so.

Alas me! Could you have the heart,
my Loys?

[To a Guard who whispers.] Oh, bring
the holy Nuncio here forthwith!

[The Guards go.]

Loys, a rueful sight, comes to see
The grey discarded Prefect leave his
post,

With tears i' the eye! So you are
Prefect now?

You depose me—you succeed me?
Ha, ha!

Loys. And dare you laugh, whom
laughter less becomes
Than yesterday's forced meekness we
beheld . . .

Pref. . . . When you so eloquently
pleaded, Loys,

For my dismissal from the post?—
Ah, meek

With cause enough, consult the
Nuncio else!

And wish him the like meekness—for
so staunch

A servant of the church can scarce
have bought

His share in the Isle, and paid for it,
hard pieces!

You've my successor to condole with,
Nuncio!

I shall be safe by then i' the galley,
Loys!

Loys. You make as you would tell
me you rejoice

To leave your scene of . . .

Pr f. Trade in the dear Druses
Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what
yesterday

We had enough of! Drove I in the
Isle

A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,
Which you'll need shortly! Did it
never breed

Suspicion in you, all was not pure
profit.

When I, the insatiate . . . and so
forth . . . was bent

On having a partaker in my rule?

Why did I yield this Nuncio half the
gain,

If not that I might also shift . . .
what on him?

Half of the peril, Loys!

Loys. Peril?

Pref. Hark you!

I'd love you if you'd let me—this for
reason,

You save my life at price of . . . well,
say risk

At least, of yours. I came a long
time since

To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade
me tame

These savage wizards, and reward
myself—

Loys. The Knights who so repudi-
ate your crime?

Pref. Loys, the Knights! we
doubtless understood

Each other; as for trusting to reward
From any friend beside myself . . .

No, no!

I clutched mine on the spot, when
it was sweet,

And I had taste for it. I felt these
wizards

Alive—was sure they were not on
me, only

When I was on them: but with age
comes caution:

And stinging pleasures please less
and sting more.

Year by year, fear by fear! The girls
were brighter,

Than ever (faith, there's yet one
Anael left.

I set my heart upon—Oh, prithee, let
That brave new sword lie still!)

These joys looked brighter,
But silenter the town, too, as I passed.

With this alcove's delicious memories
Began to mingle visions of gaunt

fathers,
Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the

mine, the oar,
Stealing to catch me: brief, when I

began
To quake with fear—(I think I hear

the Chapter
Solicited to let me leave, now all

Worth staying for was gained and
gone!)

I say.
Just when for the remainder of my

life
All methods of escape seemed lost—
that then

Up should a young hot-headed Loys
spring,

Talk very long and loud, in fine,
compel

The Knights to break their whole
arrangement, have me

Home for pure shame—from this safe-
hold of mine

Where but ten thousand Druses seek
my life,

To my wild place of banishment, San
Gines

By Murcia, where my three fat
manors lying,

Purchased by gains here and the
Nuncio's gold,

Are all I have to guard me,—that
such fortune

Should fall to me, I hardly could
expect!

Therefore, I say, I'd love you!

Loys. Can it be?
I play into your hands then? Oh,
no, no!

The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order

Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit?

But I will back—will yet unveil you!
Pref. Me?

To whom?—perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter

Shook his white head thrice—and some dozen times

My hand this morning shook, for value paid

To that Italian Saint, Sir Cosimo?—Indignant at my wringing year by year

A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,

As you recounted; felt he not aggrieved?

Well might he—I allowed for his half-share

Merely one hundred! To Sir . . .
Loys. See! you dare

Inculcate the whole Order; yet should I,

A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change

Their evil way, had they been firm in it?

Answer me!

Pref. Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,

And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,

And the young arm, we'll even say, my Loys,

—The fear of losing or diverting these Into another channel, by gainsaying

A novice too abruptly, could not influence

The Order! You might join, for aught they cared,

Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well,

I thank you for my part, at all events! Stay here till they withdraw you!

You'll inhabit

This palace—sleep, perchance, in this alcove,

Where now I go to meet our holy friend:

Good! and now disbelieve me if you can:

This is the first time for long years I enter

Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if I lifted

The lid up of my tomb!

Loys. They share his crime! God's punishment will overtake you yet!

Pref. Thank you it does not! Pardon this last flash:

I bear a sober visage presently With the disinterested Nuncio here—

His purchase-money safe at Murcia too!

Let me repeat—for the first time, no draught

Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.

When we next meet, this folly may have passed,

We'll hope—Ha, ha!

[*Goes thro' the arras.*]
Loys. Assure me but . . . he's

gone!

He could not lie! Then what have I escaped!

I, who have so nigh given up happiness

For ever, to be linked with him and them!

Oh, opportunist of discoveries! I Their Knight? I utterly renounce

them all!

Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? yes

The same hyena groan-like laughter! Quick—

To Djabal! I am one of them at last,

Those simple-hearted Druses—Anael's tribe!

Djabal! She's mine at last—Djabal, I say!— [*Goes.*]

ACT IV

Enter DJABAL.

Dja. Let me but slay the Prefect—The end now!

To-morrow will be time enough to pry

Into the means I took : suffice, they
served,
[Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge
True to its object.

[*Seeing the robes, &c. disposed.*

. . . Mine should never so
Have hurried to accomplishment !

Thee, Djabal,
Far other moods befitted ! Calm the
Robe

Should clothe this doom's awarder !

[*Taking the robe.*] Shall I dare
Assume my nation's Robe ? I am at
least

A Druse again, chill Europe's policy
Drops from me—I dare take the
Robe. Why not

The Tiar ? I rule the Druses, and
what more

Betokens it than rule ?—yet—yet—

[*Lays down the Tiar.*

[*Footsteps in the alcove.*] He comes !

[*Taking the sword.*

If the sword serves, let the Tiar lie !

So, feet

Clogged with the blood of twenty years
can fall

Thus lightly ! Round me, all ye
ghosts ! He'll lift . . .

Which arm to push the arras wide ?—
or both ?

Stab from the neck down to the heart
—there stay !

Near he comes—nearer—the next
footstep ! Now !

[*As he dashes aside the arras.*

ANAEI is discovered.

Ha ! Anael ! Nay, my Anael, can it be ?
I heard you the trumpet ? I must slay
him here,

And here you ruin all. Why speak
you not ?

Anael, the Prefect comes ! [ANAEI
screams.] So late to feel

'Tis not a sight for you to look upon ?
A moment's work—but such work !

Till you go,

I must be idle—idle, I risk all !

[*Pointing to her hair.*

Those locks are well, and you are
beauteous thus,

But with the dagger 'tis, I have to do !

An. With mine !

Dja. Blood—Anael ?

An. Djabal—'tis thy deed !

It must be—I had hoped to claim it
mine—

Be worthy thee—but I must needs
confess

'Twas not I, but thyself . . . not I
have . . . Djabal !

Speak to me !

Dja. Oh my punishment !

An. Speak to me !

While I can speak—touch me—de-
spite the blood !

When the command passed from thy
soul to mine,

I went, fire leading me, muttering of
thee,

And the approaching exaltation,—
make

One sacrifice ! I said,—and he sate
there,

Bade me approach ; and, as I did
approach,

Thy fire with music burst into my
brain—

'Twas but a moment's work, thou
saidst—perchance

It may have been so ! well, it is thy
deed !

Dja. It is my deed !

An. His blood, all
this !—this ! And . . .

And more—sustain me, Djabal—wait
not—now

Let flash thy glory ! Change thyself
and me !

It must be ! Ere the Druses flock to us !
At least confirm me ? Djabal—blood

gushed forth—

He was our tyrant—but I looked he'd
fall

Prone as asleep—why else is Death
called sleep ?

Sleep ? He bent o'er his breast—

'Tis sin, I know,

Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let
him ?

Be it thou that punishest, not he—
who creeps

On his red breast—is here—'tis the
small groan

Of a child—no worse! Bestow the
new life, then!

Too swift it cannot be, too strange,
surpassing!

[Following him up and down.

Now! Change us both! Change
me and change thou!

Dja. [Sinks on his knees.] Thus!
Behold my change! You have done
nobly! I!—

An. Can Hakeem kneel?

Dja. No Hakeem,
but mere Djabal!

I have spoken falsely, and this woe is
come.

No—hear me ere scorn blasts me!
Once and ever,

The deed is mine . . . Oh think
upon the Past!

An. [To herself.] Did I strike once,
or twice, or many times?

Dja. . . . I came to lead my tribe
where, bathed in glooms,

Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep—
Anael, I saw my tribe—I said, "With-
out

A miracle this cannot be"—I said
"Be there a miracle!"—for I saw
you!

An. His head lies south the portal!

Dja. —Weighed with this

The general good, how could I choose
my own,

What matter was my purity of soul?

Little by little I engaged myself—
Heaven would accept me for its in-
strument,

I hoped—I said, Heaven had accepted
me!

An. Is it this blood breeds dreams
in me?—Who said

You were not Hakeem? and your
miracles—

The fire that plays innocuous round
your form?

[Again changing her whole manner.

Ah, thou wouldst try me—thou art
Hakeem still!

Dja. Woe—woe! As if the Druses
of the Mount

(Scarce Arabs even there—but here,
in the Isle,

Beneath their former selves, should
comprehend

The subtle lore of Europe! A few
secrets

That would not easily affect the
meanest

Of the crowd there, could wholly
subjugate

The best of our poor tribe! Again
that eye?

*An. [After a pause springs to his
neck.]* Djabal, in this there can
be no deceit!

Why, Djabal, were you human only,
—think,

Maani is but human, Khalil human,
Loys is human even—did their words
Haunt me, their looks pursue me?

Shame on you

So to have tried me! Rather, shame
on me

So to need trying! Could I, with
the Prefect

And the blood, there—could I see
only you?

—Hang by your neck over this gulf
of blood?

Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal!
Am I saved?

*[As DJABAL slowly unclasps her
arms, and puts her silently from
him.*

Hakeem would save me! Thou art
Djabal! Crouch!

Bow to the dust, thou basest of our
kind!

The pile of thee, I reared up to the
cloud—

Full, midway, of our Fathers' trophied
tombs,

Based on the living rock, devoured
not by

The unstable desert's jaws of sand,—
falls prone!

Fire, music, quenched: and now thou
liest there

A ruin, obscene creatures will moan
thro'!

—Let us come, Djabal!

Dja. Whither come?

An. At once

Lest so it grow intolerable. Come!

Will I not share it with thee? Best
at once!
So feel less pain! Let them deride—
thy tribe
Now trusting in thee,—Loys shall
deride!
Come to them, hand in hand, with me!
Dja. Where come?
An. Where?—to the Druses thou
hast wronged! Confess,
Now that the end is gained—(I love
thee now)
That thou hast so deceived them—
(perchance love thee
Better than ever!) Come, receive
their doom
Of infamy—(Oh, best of all I love
thee!
Shame with the man, no triumph
with the God,
Be mine!) Come!
Dja. Never! more shame yet?
and why?
Why? You have called this deed
mine—it is mine!
And with it I accept its circumstance.
How can I longer strive with Fate?
The Past
Is past—my false life shall henceforth
show true—
Hear me: the argosies touch land by
this:
They bear us to fresh scenes and
happier skies;
What if we reign together?—if we
keep
Our secret for the Druses' good?—by
means
Of even their superstition, plant in
them
New life? I learn from Europe: all
who seek
Man's good must awe man, by such
means as these.
We two will be divine to them—we
are!
All great works in this world spring
from the ruins
Of greater projects—ever, on our
earth,
Men block out Babels, to build Baby-
lons.

I wrest the weapon from your hand!
I claim
The deed! Retire! You have my
ring—you bar
All access to the Nuncio till the
forces
From Venice land!
An. Thou wilt feign
Hakeem then?
Dja. [*Putting the Tiar of Hakeem
on his head.*] And from this
moment that I dare ope wide
Eyes that till now refused to see,
begins
My true dominion! for I know my-
self,
And what I am to personate. No
word?
[*ANAEL goes.*
'Tis come on me at last! His blood
on her—
What memories will follow that!
Her eye,
Her fierce distorted lip and ploughed
black brow—
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so
poorly tamed
The Syrian blood from out thee?
Thou, presume
To work in this foul earth by means
not foul?
Scheine, as for Heaven,—but, on the
earth, be glad
If a least ray like Heaven's be left
thee!
Thus
I shall be calm—in readiness—no way
Surprised. [*A noise without.*
This should be Khalil
and my Druses!
Venice is come then! Thus I grasp
thee, sword!
Druses, 'tis Hakeem saves you! In!
Behold
Your Prefect!
*Enter LOYS. DJABAL hides the
khandjar in his robe.*
Loys. Oh, well found, Djabal!—
but no time for words.
You know who waits there?
[*Pointing to the alcove.*

Well!—and that 'tis there
He meets the Nuncio? Well! Now,
a surprise—

He there—

Dja.
Loys

I know—

—is now

mortal's lord.

Is absolutely powerless—call him,
dead—

He is no longer Prefect—you are
Prefect!

Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the
dark,

Nothing unworthy Breton blood,
believe!

I understood at once your urgency
That I should leave this isle for
Rhodes; I felt

What you were loath to speak—your
need of help;

I have fulfilled the task, that earnest-
ness

Imposed on me; have, face to face,
confronted

The Prefect in full Chapter, charged
on him

The enormities of his long rule; he
stood

Mute, offered no defence, no crime
denied;

On which, I spoke of you, and of
your tribe,

Your faith so like our own, and all
you've urged

So oft to me—I spoke, too, of your
goodness,

Your patience—brief, I hold hence-
forth the Isle

In charge, am nominally Prefect,—
but you,

You are associated in my rule—

Are the true Prefect! Ay, such faith
had they

In my assurance of your loyalty
(For who insults an imbecile old
man?)

That we assume the Prefecture this
hour!

You gaze at me! Hear greater
wonders yet—

I throw down all this fabric I have
built!

These Knights, I was prepared to
worship . . . but

Of that, another time; what's now to
say,

Is—I shall never be a Knight! Oh,
Djabal,

Here first I throw all prejudice aside,
And call you brother! I am Druse
like you!

My wealth, my friends, my power,
are wholly yours,

Your people's, which is now my
people—for

There is a maiden of your tribe, I love—
She loves me—Khalil's sister—

Dja.

Anael?

Loys.

Start you?

Seems what I say, unknighly? Thus
it chanced:

When first I came, a novice, to the
Isle . . .

*Enter one of the NUNCIO's Guards
from the alcove.*

Guard. Oh, horrible! Sir Loys!
Here is Loys!

And here—

[*Others enter from the alcove.*

[*Pointing to DJABAL.*] Secure him,
bind him—this is he!

[*They surround DJABAL.*

Loys. Madmen—what is't you do?
Stand from my friend,

And tell me!

Guard. Thou canst have no
part in this—

Surely no part—but slay him not!
The Nuncio

Commanded, Slay him not!

Loys.

Speak, or . . .

Guard.

The Prefect,
Lies murdered there by him thou dost
embrace.

Loys. By Djabal? miserable fools?
How Djabal?

[*A Guard lifts DJABAL's robe;
DJABAL flings down the khandjar.*

Loys. [*After a pause.*] Thou hast
received some insult worse than
all—

Some outrage not to be endured—

[*To the Guards.*] Stand back!

He is my friend—more than my friend! Thou hast slain him upon that provocation!

Gund. No!

No provocation! 'Tis a long devised Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved:

He is their Khalif—'tis on that pretence—

Their mighty Khalif who died long ago,

And now is come to life and light again—

All is just now revealed, I know not how,

By one of his confederates—who, struck

With horror at this murder, first apprised

The Nuncio. As 'twas said, we find this Djabal

Here where we take him.

Dja. [*Aside.*] Who broke faith with me?

Loys. [*To DJABAL.*] Hear'st thou? Speak! Till thou speak, I keep off these,

Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou

A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend,

Whose tale was of an inoffensive race,

With . . . but thou know'st—on that tale's truth I pledged

My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?

Dja. Loys, I am as thou hast heard. All's true!

No more concealment! As these tell thee, all

Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough

To crush this handful: the Venetians land

Even now in our behalf. Loys, we part here!

Thou, serving much, would'st fain have served me more;

It might not be. I thank thee. As thou hearest,

We are a separated tribe: farewell!

Loys. Oh, where will truth be found now? Canst thou so belie the Druses? Do they share thy crime?

Those thou professedst of our Breton stock,

Are partners with thee? Why, I saw but now

Khalil, my friend—he spoke with me—no word

Of this! and Anael—whom I love, and who

Loves me—she spoke no word of this! *Dja.* Poor Boy!

Anael, who loves thee? Khalil, fast thy friend?

We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux?

No—older than the oldest—princelier Than Europe's princeliest tribe are we.

—Enough For thee, that on our simple faith we found

A monarchy to shame your monarchies At their own trick and secret of success.

The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon

The palace-step of him whose life ere night

Is forfeit, as that child shall know, and yet

Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth

The kind interposition of a boy? —Can only save ourselves when thou concedest?

—Khalil admire thee? He is my right hand,

My delegate!—Anael accept thy love? She is my Bride!

Loys. Thy Bride? She one of them?

Dja. My Bride!

Loys. And she retains her glorious eyes!

She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!

Ah—who but she directed me to find

Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil

Bade me seek Djabal there, too ! All
is true !

What spoke the Prefect worse of them
than this ?

Did the Church ill to institute long
since

Perpetual warfare with such ser-
pentry

As these ? Have I desired to shift my
part.

Evade my share in her design ? 'Tis
well !

Dja. Loys, I have wronged thee—
but unwittingly :

I never thought there was in thee a
virtue

That could attach itself to what thou
deemest

A race below thine own. I wronged
thee, Loys,

But that is over : all is over now,
Save the protection I ensure against

My people's anger—by their Khalif's
side,

Thou art secure and may'st depart :
so, come !

Loys. Thy side ?—I take protection
at thy hand ?

Enter other Guards.

Guards. Fly with him ! fly, Sir

Loys ! 'tis too true !

And only by his side thou may'st
escape !

The whole tribe is in full revolt—they
flock

About the palace—will be here—on
thee—

And there are twenty of us, we, the
Guards

Of the Nuncio, to withstand them !
Even we

I had staid to meet our death in igno-
rance,

But that one Druse, a single faithful
Druse,

Made known the horror to the Nuncio !
Fly !

The Nuncio stands aghast. At least
let us

Escape their wrath, O Hakeem ! We
are nought

In thy tribe's persecution ! [*To Loys.*]
Keep by him !

They hail him Hakeem, their dead
Prince, returned—

He is their God, they shout, and at
his beck

Are life and death !

Loys. [*Springing at the khandjar*
DJABAL had thrown down, seizes
him by the throat.]

Thus by his side am I !

Thus I resume my knighthood and its
warfare !

Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride
of place !

Thus art thou caught ! Without, thy
dupes may cluster,

Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee,—
thou art Hakeem,

How say they ?—God art thou ! but
also here

Is the least, meanest, youngest the
Church calls

Her servant, and his single arm avails
To aid her as she lists. I rise, and
thou

Art crushed ! Hordes of thy Druses
flock without ;

Here thou hast me, who represent the
Cross,

Honour and Faith, 'gainst Hell,
Mahound, and thee !

Die ! [*DJABAL remains calm.*] Im-
plore my mercy, Hakeem, that
my scorn

May help me ! Nay—I cannot ply
thy trade—

I am no Druse—no stabber—and
thine eye,

Thy form, are too much as they were
—my friend

Had such ! Speak ! Beg for mercy
at my foot !

[*DJABAL still silent.*]

Heaven could not ask so much of me
—not, sure,

So much ! I cannot kill him so !

Thou art
Strong in thy cause, then ! Dost out-
brave us, then !

Heard'st thou that one of thine ac-
complices,

Thy very people, has accused thee?
 Meet
 His charge! Thou hast not even slain
 the Prefect
 As thy own vile creed warrants.
 Meet that Druse
 Come with me and disprove him—be
 thou tried
 By him, nor seek appeal—promise
 me this—
 Or I will do God's office! What,
 shalt thou
 Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet
 Truth
 Want even an executioner? Consent,
 Or I will strike—look in my face—I
 will!
Dja. Give me again my khandjar,
 if thou darest!

[*Loys gives it.*]

Let but one Druse accuse me, and I
 plunge
 This home. A Druse betray me?
 Let us go!
 [*Aside.*] Who has betrayed me?
 [*Shouts without.*]
 Hearest thou? I hear
 No plainer now than years ago I heard
 That shout—but in no dream now!
 They Return!
 Wilt thou be leader with me, Loys?
 Well!

ACT V

The Uninitiated Druses, covering the stage tumultuously, and speaking together.

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there—Come, old Nasif—link thine arm in mine—we fight, if needs be—Come, what is a great fight-word? "Lebanon?" (My daughter—my daughter!)—But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?—Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves—Where is

Hakeem?—The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth—a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent—Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

Enter the NUNCIO with Guards.

Nuncio. [*To his Attendants.*] Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice

Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell Sir Loys he is mine, the Church's hope:

Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!

Lo, this black disemboing of the Isle!

[*To the Druses.*] Ah, children, what a sight for these old eyes

That kept themselves alive this voyage through

To smile their very last on you! I came

To gather one and all you wandering sheep

Into my fold, as tho' a father came . . .

As tho', in coming, a father should . . .

[*To his Guards.*] (Ten, twelve—Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None?

The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!)

[*To the Druses.*] As if one came to a son's house, I say,
 So did I come—no guard with me—to find . . .

Alas—alas!

A Druse. Who is the old man?

Another. Oh, ye are to shout!

Children, he styles you.

Druses. Ay, the Prefect's slain!
 Glory to the Khalif, our Father!

Nuncio. Even so!
 I find (ye prompt aright), your Father slain;

While most he plotted for your good,
 that father

(Alas! how kind, ye never knew)
 —lies slain!

[*Aside.*] (And Hell's worm gnaw the
glozing knave—with me,
For being duped by his cajoleries!
Are these the Christians? These the
docile crew

My bezants went to make me Bishop
o'er?)

[*To his Attendants, who whisper.*]
What say ye does this wizard
style himself?

Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third
Fatemite?

What is this jargon? He—the insane
Khalif,

Dead near three hundred years ago,
come back

In flesh and blood again?

Druses. He mutters! Hear ye?

He is blaspheming Hakeem. The
old man

Is our dead Prefect's friend! Tear him!

Nuncio. Ye dare not!

I stand here with my five-and-seventy
years,

The Patriarch's power behind, and
God's above me!

Those years have witnessed sin
enough; ere now

Misguided men arose against their
lords,

And found excuse; but ye, to be en-
slaved

By sorceries—cheats;—alas! the
same tricks, tried

On my poor children in this nook of
the earth,

Could triumph,—that have been suc-
cessively

Exploded, laughed to scorn, all
nations thro'—

“*Romaioi loudaioi te kai proselutoi,*

“*Cretes and Arabians*”—you are
duped the last!

Said I, refrain from tearing me?
I pray ye

Tear me! Shall I return to tell the
Patriarch

That so much love was wasted—every
gift

Rejected, from his benison I brought,
Down to the galley-full of bezants,

sunk

An hour since at the harbour's mouth,
by that . . .

That . . . never will I speak his hated
name!

[*To his Servants.*] What was the
name his fellow slip-fetter

Called their arch-wizard by? [*They
whisper.*] Oh, Djabal was't?

Druses. But how a sorcerer? false
wherein?

Nuncio. (Ay, Djabal!)

How false? Ye know not, Djabal
has confessed . . .

Nay, that by tokens found on him we
learn . . .

What I sailed hither solely to divulge—
How by his spells the demons were
allured

To seize you—not that these be aught
save lies

And mere illusions. Is this clear?
I say,

By measures such as these, he would
have led you

Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye?

Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my
sons?

Druses. Hark ye!

Nuncio. —Be of one privilege
amerced?

No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies be!

No! With the Patriarch's license,

still I bid ye

Tear him to pieces who misled you!
Haste!

Druses. The old man's beard
shakes, and his eyes are white fire!

After all, I know nothing of Djabal
beyond what Karshook says; he

knows but what Khalil says; who
knows just what Djabal says himself

—Now, the little Copht Prophet, I
saw at Cairo in my youth, began by

promising each bystander three full
measures of wheat . . .

*Enter KHALIL and the Initiated
Druses.*

A'ha. Venice and her deliverance
are at hand!

Their fleet stands thro' the harbour!
Hath he slain

The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change
come yet?

Nuncio. [*To Attendants.*] What's
this of Venice? Who's this boy?

[*Attendants whisper.*] One Khalil?
Djabal's accomplice, Loys called, but
now,

The only Druse, save Djabal's self,
to fear?

[*To the Druses.*] I cannot hear ye
with these aged ears:

Is it so? Ye would have my troops
assist?

Doth he abet him in his sorceries?

Down with the cheat, guards, as my
children bid!

[*They spring at KHALIL: as
he beats them back.*

Stay—no more bloodshed—spare de-
luded youth!

Whom seek'st thou? (I will teach
him)—Whom, my child?

Thou knowest not what these know,
have just told me.

I am an old man, as thou seest—have
done

With earth, and what should move
me but the truth?

Art thou the only fond one of thy
tribe?

'Tis I interpret for thy tribe!—

K'ha. Oh, this
Is the expected Nuncio! Druses,
hear—

Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake
The glory Hakeem gains you! While
I speak,

The ships touch land: who makes
for Lebanon?

They'll plant the winged lion in these
halls!

Nuncio. [*Aside.*] If it be true!
Venice?—Oh, never true!

Yet, Venice would so gladly thwart
our Knights,

And fain get footing here, so close by
Rhodes!

Oh, to be duped this way!

K'ha. Ere he appears
To lead you gloriously, repent, I say!

Nuncio. [*Aside.*] Oh, any way to
stretch the arch-wizard stark

Ere the Venetians come! Were he
cut off,

The rest were easily tamed. [*To the
Druses.*] He? Bring him forth!

Since so you needs will have it, I
assent!

You'd judge him, say you, on the
spot? Confound

The sorcerer in his very circle?
Where's

Our short black-bearded sallow friend
who said

He'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by
one stab?

Bring Djabal forth at once!

Druses. Ay, bring him forth!
The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and
silk—

And we're the Patriarch's children—
true men, we!

Where is the glory? Show us all the
glory!

K'ha. You dare not so insult him!
What, not see . . .

(I tell thee, Nuncio, these are unin-
structed,

Untrusted—they know nothing of our
Khalif!)

—Not see that if he lets a doubt arise
'Tis but to give yourselves the chance
of seeming

To have some influence in your own
Return!

That all may say they would have
trusted him

Without the all-convincing glory—ay,
And did! Embrace the occasion,

friends! For, think—
What merit when his change takes

place? But now,
For your sakes, he should not reveal

himself!
No—could I ask and have, I would
not ask

The change yet!

Enter DJABAL and LOYS.

Spite of all, reveal thyself!

I had said, pardon them for me—for
Anael—

For our sakes pardon these besotted
men—

Ay—for thine own—they hurt not thee! Yet now
One thought swells in me and keeps down all else!
This Nuncio couples shame with thee, 'as called
Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things
Has said—he is but an old fretful man!

Hakeem—nay, I must call thee Hakeem now—
Reveal thyself! See! Where is Anael?—See!

Loys. [To *Dja.*] Here are thy people! Keep thy word to me!

Dja. Who of my people hath accused me?

Nuncio. So

So, this is *Djabal*, Hakeem, and what not?

A fit deed, *Loys*, for thy first Knight's day!

May it be augury of thy after life!

Ever be truncheon of the Church as now

That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge

Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to Dja.*] as these bid me,

Forfeit for murder on thy lawful prince,

Thou conjurer that peep'st and mutterest!

Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells, children?

But hear how I dispose of all his spells!)

Thou art a Prophet?—would'st entice thy tribe

Away?—thou workest miracles? (Attend!

Let him but move me with his spells!)
I, Nuncio . . .

Dja. . . . Which how thou cam'st to be, I say not now,

Though I have also been at *Stamboul*, Luke!

—Ply thee with spells, forsooth!
What need of spells?

If Venice, in her Admiral's person, stoop

To ratify thy compact with her foes,
The Hospitallers, for this Isle—with-
draw

Her warrant of the deed which re-
instates

My people in their freedom, tricked
away

By him I slew,—refuse to convoy us
To Lebanon and keep the Isle we
leave—

—Then will be time to try what spells
can do!

Dost thou dispute the Republic's
power?

Nuncio. Lo ye!

He tempts me, too, the wily exorcist!
No! The renowned Republic was
and is

The Patriarch's friend: 'tis not for
courting Venice

That I—that these implore thy blood
of me!

Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha,
so subtle?

Ye, Druses, hear him! Will ye be
deceived?

How he evades me! Where's the
miracle

He works? I bid him to the proof
—fish up

Your galley-full of bezants that he
sunk!

That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my
age—

I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand
forth

To save you from the good Republic's
rage

When she shall find her fleet was
summoned here

To aid the mummeries of this crafty
knave!

[As the Druses hesitate, his
Attendants whisper.

Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold
this while

One, who, his close confederate till
now,

Confesses *Djabal* at the last a cheat,
And every miracle a cheat! Who
throws me

His head? I make three offers, once
I offer,
And twice . . .

Dja. Let who moves perish
at my foot!

Kha. Thanks, Hakeem, thanks!
Oh, Anael, Maani,

Why tarry they?

Druses. [*To each other.*] He can!
He can! Live fire

[*To the NUNCIO.*] (I say he can, old
man! Thou know'st him not—)
Live fire like that thou seest now in
his eyes,

Plays fawning round him—See! The
change begins!

All the brow lightens as he lifts his
arm!

Look not at me! It was not I!

Dja. What Druse
Accused me, as he saith? I bid each
bone

Crumble within that Druse! None,
Loys, none

Of my own people, as thou saidst, have
raised

A voice against me.

Nuncio. [*Aside.*] Venice to come!
Death!

Dja. [*Continuing.*] Confess and go
unscathed, however false!

Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I
would submit

To thy pure malice did one Druse con-
fess!

How said I, Loys?

Nuncio. [*To his Attendants, who
whisper.*] Ah, ye counsel so?

[*Aloud.*] Bring in the witness, then,
who, first of all,

Disclosed the treason! Now I have
thee, wizard!

Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids
you tear him

Joint after joint—well then, one does
speak! One,

Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,
But who hath voluntarily proposed

To expiate, by confessing thus, the
fault

Of having trusted him.

[*They bring in a veiled Druse.*

Loys. Now Djabal, now!

Nuncio. Friend, Djabal fronts you!
(Make a ring, sons!)—Speak!

Expose this Djabal; what he was, and
how;

The wiles he used, the aims he
cherished; all,

Explicitly as late you spoke to
these

My servants—I absolve and pardon
you.

Loys. Thou hast the dagger ready,
Djabal?

Dja. Speak, Recreant!

Druses. Stand back, fool! farther!
Suddenly

You shall see some huge serpent glide
from under

The empty vest—or down will thunder
crash!

Back, Khalil!

Kha. I go back? Thus go
I back!

[*To AN.*] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt
face the Khalif! Thus!

[*He tears away ANAEL'S veil:*
DJABAL folds his arms and bows
his head: the Druses fall back:
LOYS springs from the side of
DJABAL and the NUNCIO.

Loys. Then she was true—she only
of them all!

True to her eyes—may keep those
glorious eyes,

And now be mine, once again mine!
Oh, Anael!

Dared I think thee a partner in his
crime—

That blood could soil that hand? nay,
'tis mine—Anael,

—Not mine?—Who offer thee before
all these

My heart, my sword, my name—so
thou wilt say

That Djabal, who affirms thou art his
bride,

Lies—say but that he lies!

Dja. Thou, Anael?

Loys. Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance
for me—the last!

Thou hast had every other—thou hast
spoken

Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee
—let me

Speak first, now ; I will speak, now !
Nuncio. Loys, pause !

Thou art the Duke's son, Breton's
choicest stock

Loys of Dreux—God's sepulchre's first
sword

This wilt thou spit on, this degrade,
this trample

To earth ?

Loys [To AN.] Ah, who had fore-
seen, " One day, Loys

" Will stake these gifts against some
other good

" In the whole world ? " I give them
thee ! I would

My strong will might bestow realshape
on them.

That I might see, with my own eyes,
thy foot

Tread on their very neck ! 'Tis not
by gifts

I put aside this Djabal—we will
stand—

We do stand—see—two men ! Dja-
bal, stand forth

Who's worth her—I or thou ? I
who for Anael

Kept, purely, uprightly my way, the
long

True way—left thee each by-path—
boldly lived

Without the lies and blood,—or thou,
or thou ?

I ! Love me, Anael ! Leave the
blood and him !

[*To Dja.*] Now speak—now, quick on
this that I have said,—

Thou with the blood, speak if thou
art a man !

Dja. [To AN.] And was it thou
betrayedst me ? 'Tis well !

I have deserved this of thee, and
submit :

Nor 'tis much evil thou inflictest : life
Ends here. The cedars shall not

wave for us—
For there was crime, and must be

punishment.
See fate ! By thee I was seduced—
by thee

I perish yet do I, can I repent ?

I, with my Arab instinct, thwarted
ever

By my Frank policy,—and, within
turn,

My Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab
heart

While these remained in equipoise, I
lived

—Nothing ; had either been pre-
dominant,

As a Frank schemer or an Arab
mystic,

I had been something ;— now, each
has destroyed

The other—and behold, from out their
crash,

A third and better nature rises
up—

My mere Man's-nature ! And I yield
to it—

I love thee—I—who did not love
before !

An. Djabal—

Dja. It seemed love, but
true love it was not—

How could I love while thou adoredst
me ?

Now thou despisest, art above me so
Immeasurably—thou, no other,

doonest
My death now—this my steel shall

execute
Thy judgment—I shall feel thy hand

in it !
Oh, luxury to worship, to submit,

Transcended, doomed to death by
thee !

An. My Djabal !

Dja. Dost hesitate ? I force thee
then ! Approach,

Druses ! for I am out of reach of
fate ;

No further evil waits me—Speak the
truth !

Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and
hear, Loys !

An. HAKEEM ! [She falls dead.

*[The Druses scream, grovelling
before him.*

Ah, Hakeem !—not on me thy
wrath !

Biamrallah, pardon—never doubted I!
Ah, dog, how sayest thou?

[They surround and seize the Nuncio and his Guards. LOVS flings himself upon the body of ANAEL, on which DIABAL continues to gaze as stupefied.]

Nuncio. Captives! Have ye eyes?
Whips, racks, should teach you!

What, his fools? his dupes?
Leave me! unhand me!

Kha. *[Approaching DIABAL timidly.]* Save her for my sake!

She was already thine—she would
have shared

To-day thine exaltation—think! this
day

Her hair was plaited thus because of
thee

Yes, feel the soft bright hair—feel!

Nuncio *[Struggling with those who have seized him].*

What, because
His leman dies for him? You think
it hard

To die? Oh, would you were at
Rhodes, and choice

Of deaths should suit you!

Kha. *[Bending over ANAEL'S body.]*

Just restore her life!

So little does it—there—the eyelids
tremble!

'Twas not my breath that made them
—and the lips

Move of themselves— I could restore
her life!

Hakeem, we have forgotten—have
presumed

On our free converse—we are better
taught.

See, I kiss—how I kiss thy garment's
hem

For her! She kisses it—Oh, take
her deed

In mine—Thou dost believe now,
Anaël?—See

She smiles! Were her lips open o'er
the teeth

So, when I spoke first? She believes
in thee!

Go not without her to the Cedars, Lord!
Or leave us both—I cannot go alone!

I have obeyed thee, if I dare say so—
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal
knew?

Thou feelest then my tears fall hot
and fast

Upon thy hand—and yet thou speakest
not!

Ere the Venetian trumpet sound—
ere thou

Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save her
—save her!

Nuncio. And the accursed Republic
will arrive

And find me in their toils—dead,
very like,

Under their feet!

What way—not one way yet
To foil them? None? *[Observing*

DIABAL'S face.]

What ails the Khalif? Ah,
That ghastly face—a way to foil them

yet!

[To the Druses.] Look to your Khalif,
Druses! Is that face

God Hakeem's? Where is triumph
—where is . . . what

Said he of exaltation—hath he promised
So much to-day? Why then, exalt

thyself!

Cast off that husk, thy form, set free
thy soul

In splendour! Now, bear witness—
here I stand—

I challenge him exalt himself, and I
Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!

The Druses. Exalt thyself—exalt
thyself—O Hakeem!

Dja. *[Advances.]* I can confess now
all from first to last.

There is no longer shame for me! I
am . . .

[Here the Venetian trumpet sounds—the Druses shout; his eye catches the expression of those about him, and, as the old dr. am comes back, he is again confident and inspired.]

. . . Am I not Hakeem? And ye
would have crawled

But yesterday within these impure
courts

Where now ye stand erect!—Not
grand enough?

—What more could be conceded to
such beasts

As all of you, so sunk and base as you
But a mere man?—A man among
such beasts

Was miracle enough—yet him you
doubt,

Him you forsake, him fain would you
destroy—

With the Venetians at your gate, the
Nuncio

Thus—(see the baffled hypocrite!)
and best

The Prefect there!

Druses. No, Hakeem, ever thine!

Nuncio. He lies—and twice he lies
—and thrice he lies!

Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

Dja. Druses! we shall henceforth
be far away!

Out of mere mortal ken—above the
Cedars—

But we shall see ye go, hear ye return,
Repeopling the old solitudes,—thro'
thee.

My Khalil! Thou art full of me—I fill
Thee full—my hands thus fill thee!

Yester eve,

--Nay, but this morn—I deemed thee
ignorant

Of all to do, requiring words of mine
To teach it—now, thou hast all gifts
in one,

With truth and purity go other gifts!
All gifts come clustering to that—go,
lead

My People home whate'er betide!

[*Turning to the Druses.*] Ye take
This Khalil for my delegate? To him
Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon—
Ye follow?

Druses. We follow! Now exalt
thyself!

Dja. [*Raises LOYS.*] Then to thee,
Loys! How I wronged thee,
Loys!

—Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt
have full revenge,

Fit for thy noble self, revenge—and
thus:

Thou, loaded with these wrongs, the
princely soul,

The first sword of Christ's sepulchre
—thou shalt

Guard Khalil and my Druses home
again!

Justice, no less—God's justice and
no more,

For those I leave!—to seeking this,
devote

Some few days out of thy Knight's
brilliant life,

And, this obtained them, leave them
Lebanon,

My Druses' blessing in thine ears—
(they shall

Bless thee with blessing sure to have
its way)

—One cedar-blossom in thy Ducal cap,
One thought of Anael in thy heart—

perchance,
One thought of him who thus, to bid
thee speed,

His last word to the living speaks!
This done,

Resume thy course, and, first amid
the first

In Europe, take my heart along with
thee!

Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly—
What can withstand thee then?

[*He bends over ANAEL.*] And last
to thee!

Ah, did I dream I was to have this day
Exalted thee? A vain dream—hast
thou not

Won greater exaltation? What re-
mains

But press to thee, exalt myself to thee?

Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!

[*He stabs himself—as he falls, sup-
ported by KHALIL and LOYS, the*

VENETIANS enter; the ADMIRAL
advances.

Admiral. God and St. Mark for
Venice! Plant the Lion!

[*At the clash of the planted standard
the Druses shout, and move
tumultuously forward, LOYS
drawing his sword.*

Dja. [*Leading them a few steps
between KHALIL and LOYS.*

On to the Mountain. At the Moun-
tain, Druses! [*Dies.*

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

A TRAGEDY

PERSONS

MILDRED TRESHAM.
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM.
THOROLD, Lord Tresham.

AUSTIN TRESHAM.
HENRY, Earl Mertoun.
GERARD.

Other Retainers of Lord Tresham.

TIME, 17--.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The interior of a Lodge in LORD TRESHAM'S Park. Many Retainers crowded at the windows, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his Mansion. GERARD, the War-rener, sitting alone, his back to a table on which are flag-gons, &c.*

1st Ret. Ay—do—push, friends, and then you'll push down me.

What for? Does any hear a runner's foot,

Or a steed's trample, or a coach-wheel's cry?

Is the Earl come or his least pour-suivant?

But there's no breeding in a man of you

Save Gerard yonder: here's a half-place yet,

Old Gerard!

Ger. Save your courtesies, my friend.

Here is my place.

2nd Ret. Now, Gerard, out with it! What makes you sullen, this of all the days

I the year? To-day that, young, rich, bountiful,

Handsome Earl Mertoun, whom alone they match

With our Lord Tresham thro' the country-side,

Is coming here in utmost bravery

To ask our Master's Sister's hand?

Ger.

What then?

2nd Ret. What then? Why, you she speaks to, if she meets.

Your worship, smiles on as you hold apart

The boughs to let her thro' her forest walks,

You, always favourite for your no-deserts,

You've heard, these three days, how Earl Mertoun sues

To lay his heart, and house, and broad lands too,

At Lady Mildred's feet—and while we squeeze

Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss

One congee of the least page in his train,
You sit o' one side—"there's the

Earl," say I—
"What then," say you!

3rd Ret. I'll wager he has let
Both swans he tamed for Lady Mil-
dred, swim

Over the falls and gain the river!

Ger. Ralph,
Is not to-morrow my inspecting-
day

For you and for your hawks?

4th Ret. Let Gerard be!
He's coarse-grained, like his carved
black cross-bow stock.

Ha, look now, while we squabble
with him, look!

Well done, now—is not this beginning,
now,

To purpose?

1st Ret. Our retainers look as
fine—

That's comfort! Lord, how Richard
holds himself

With his white staff! Will not a
knave behind

Prick him upright?

4th Ret. He's only bowing, fool!
The Earl's man bent us lower by this
much.

1st Ret. That's comfort. Here's a
very cavalcade!

3rd Ret. I don't see wherefore
Richard, and his troop

Of silk and silver varlets there, should
find

Their perfumed selves so indispens-
able

On high days, holy-days! Would it
so disgrace

Our Family, if I, for instance, stood—
In my right hand a cast of Swedish
hawks,

A leash of greyhounds in my left?

Ger. —With Hugh
The logman for supporter—in his
right

The bill-hook—in his left the brush-
wood-shears!

3rd Ret. Out on you, crab! What
next, what next? The Earl!

1st Ret. Oh, Walter, groom, our
horses, do they match

The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of
the six—

They paw the ground—Ah, Walter!
and that brute

Just on his haunches by the wheel!

6th Ret. Ay—Ay!

You, Philip, are a special hand, I
hear,

At soups and sauces—what's a horse
to you?

D'ye mark that beast they've slid into
the midst

So cunningly?—then, Philip, mark
this further;

No leg has he to stand on!

1st Ret. No? That's comfort.

2nd Ret. Peace, Cook! The Earl
descends.—Well, Gerard, see

The Earl at least! Come, there's a
proper man,

I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole
or Swede,

Has got a starrier eye

3rd Ret. His eyes are blue—
But leave my hawks alone!

4th Ret. So young, and yet
So tall and shapely!

5th Ret. Here's Lord Tresham's
self!

There now—there's what a nobleman
should be!

He's older, graver, loftier, he's more
like

A House's Head!

2nd Ret. But you'd not have a
boy

—And what's the Earl beside?—
possess too soon

That stateliness?

1st Ret. Our Master takes his
hand—

Richard and his white staff are on the
move—

Back fall our people (tsh!—there's
Timothy

Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties—
And Peter's cursed rosette's a-coming

off!)

—At last I see our Lord's back and
his friend's—

And the whole beautiful bright company

Close round them—in they go!

[*Jumping down from the window-bench, and making for the table and its jugs, &c.*] Good health, long life,

Great joy to our Lord Tresham and his House!

6th *Ret.* My father drove his father first to court,

After his marriage-day—ay, did he!

2nd *Ret.* God bless

Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and the Earl!

Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!

Ger. Drink, my boys:

Don't mind me—all's not right about me—drink!

2nd *Ret.* [*Aside.*] He's vexed, now, that he let the show escape!

To GER.] Remember that the Earl returns this way—

Ger. That way?

2nd *Ret.* Just so.

Ger. Then my way's here. [*Goes.*]

2nd *Ret.* Old Gerard

Will die soon—mind, I said it! He was used

To care about the pitifullest thing That touched the House's honour, not an eye

But his could see wherein—and on a cause

Of scarce a quarter this importance, Gerard

Fairly had fretted flesh and bone away

In cares that this was right, nor that was wrong,

Such a point decorous, and such by rule—

He knew such niceties, no herald more)

And now—you see his humour: die he will!

2nd *Ret.* God help him! Who's for the great servants' hall

To hear what's going on inside! They'd follow

Lord Tresham into the saloon.

3rd *Ret.*

I!—

4th *Ret.*

I!—

Leave Frank alone for catching, at the door,

Some hint of how the parley goes inside!

Prosperity to the great House once more—

Here's the last drop!

1st *Ret.* Have at you. Boys, hurrah!

SCENE II.—*A Saloon in the Mansion.*

Enter LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN; AUSTIN, and GUENDOLEN.

Tresh. I welcome you, Lord Mertoun, yet once more

To this ancestral roof of mine. Your name

—Noble among the noblest in itself, Yet taking in your person, fame avers, New price and lustre,—(as that gem you wear,

Transmitted from a hundred knightly breasts,

Fresh chased and set and fixed by its last lord,

Seems to re-kindle at the core)—your name

Would win you welcome!

Mer. Thanks!

Tresh. —But add to that,

The worthiness and grace and dignity Of your proposal for uniting both

Our Houses even closer than respect Unites them now—add these, and

you must grant

One favour more, nor that the least,—to think

The welcome I should give;—'tis given! My lord,

My only brother, Austin—he's the King's.

Our cousin, Lady Guendolen—betrothed

To Austin: all are yours.

Mer. I thank you—less

For the expressed commendings which your seal,

And only that, authenticates forbids
 My putting from me . . . to my
 heart I take
 Your praise . . . but praise less
 claims my gratitude,
 Than the indulgent insight it implies
 Of what must needs be uppermost
 with one
 Who comes, like me, with the bare
 leave to ask.
 In weighed and measured unim-
 passioned words,
 A gift, which, if as calmly 'tis denied.
 He must withdraw, content upon his
 cheek,
 Despair within his soul:—that I dare
 ask
 Firmly, near boldly, near with con-
 fidence
 That gift, I have to thank you.—Yes,
 Lord Tresham,
 I love your sister— as you'd have one
 love
 That lady . . . oh more, more I love
 her! Wealth,
 Rank, all the world thinks *me*, they're
 yours, you know,
 To hold or part with, at your choice—
 but grant
 My true self, *me* without a rood of
 land,
 A piece of gold, a name of yesterday.
 Grant me that lady, and you . . .
 Death or life?
Guen. [*Apart to Aus.*] Why, this
 is loving, Austin!
Aus. He's so young!
Guen. Young? Old enough, I
 think, to half surmise
 He never had obtained an entrance
 here.
 Were all this fear and trembling
 needed.
Aus. Hush!
 He reddens.
Guen. Mark him, Austin;
 that's true love!
 Ours must begin again.
Tresh. We'll sit, my lord.
 Ever with best desert goes diffidence.
 I may speak plainly nor be miscon-
 ceived.

That I am wholly satisfied with you
 On this occasion, when a falcon's eye
 Were dull compared with mine to
 search out faults,
 Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers
 to give
 Or to refuse.
Mer. But you, you grant my suit?
 I have your word if hers?
Tresh. My best of words
 If hers encourage you. I trust it will.
 Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the
 way?
Mer. I . . . I . . . our two de-
 mesnes, remember, touch—
 I have been used to wander carelessly
 After my stricken game—the heron
 roused
 Deep in my woods, has trailed its
 broken wing
 Thro' thickets and glades a mile in
 yours,—or else
 Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken
 flight
 And lured me after her from tree to
 tree,
 I marked not whither . . . I have
 come upon
 The Lady's wondrous beauty unaware,
 And—and then . . . I have seen her.
Guen. [*Aside to Aus.*] Note that
 mode
 Of faultering out that when a lady
 passed
 He, having eyes, did see her! You
 had said—
 "On such a day I scanned her, head
 to foot;
 "Observed a red, where red should
 not have been,
 "Outside her elbow; but was pleased
 enough
 "Upon the whole." Let such
 irreverent talk
 Be lessoned for the future!
Tresh. What's to say
 May be said briefly. She has never
 known
 A mother's care; I stand for father
 too.
 Her beauty is not strange to you, it
 seems—

You cannot know the good and
tender heart,
Its girl's trust, and its woman's
constancy,
How pure yet passionate, how calm
yet kind.
How grave yet joyous, how reserved
yet free
As light where friends are—how
embued with lore
The world most prizes, yet the
simplest, yet
The . . . one might know I talked
of Mildred—thus
We brothers talk!

Mer. I thank you

Tresh. In a word,
Control's not for this lady; but her
wish
to please me outstrips in its subtlety
my power of being pleased—herself
creates

What she means to satisfy. My
heart

Prefers your suit to be—as 'twere its
own.

Can I say more?

Mer. . . . more—thanks,
thanks—no

Tresh. This . . . then dis-
cussed . . .

Mer. . . . I'll . . . no breath
On aughless precious I'm beneath
the roof

That holds . . . whi . . . thou . . . of
that, my speech

To you would under . . . it . . . not
do,

Since as you favour me I . . . and or
fall.

I pray you suffer that I take . . . leave!

Tresh. With less regret 'tis suf-
fered, that again

We meet, I hope, so shortly.

Mer. . . . We? again?—
Ah yes, forgive me—when shall . . .

you will crown
Your goodness by forthwith apprising
me

When . . . if . . . the Lady will
appoint a day

For me to wait on you—and her.

Tresh.

So soon

As I am made acquainted with her
thoughts

On your proposal—howsoe'er they
lean

A messenger shall bring you the
result.

Mer. You cannot bind me more
to you, my lord.

Farewell till we renew . . . I trust,
renew

A converse ne'er to disunite again.

Tresh. So may it prove!

Mer. You, Lady, you, Sir, take
My humble salutation!

Guen. and Aus. Thanks!

Tresh. Within there!

[*Servants enter. TRESHAM conducts
MERTOUN to the door. Meantime
AUSTIN remarks,*

Well,

Here I have an advantage of the
Earl,

Confess now! I'd not think that all
was safe

Because my lady's brother stood my
friend.

Why, he makes sure of her—"do
you say, yes—

"She'll not say, no"—what comes
it to beside?

I should have prayed the brother,
"speak this speech,

"For Heaven's sake urge this on
her—put in this—

"Forget not, as you'd save me,
t'other thing,—

"Then set down what she says, and
how she looks.

"And if she smiles," and (in an
under breath)

"Only let her accept me, and do you
"And all the world refuse me, if you
dare!"

Guen. That way you'd take, friend
Austin? What a shame

I was your cousin tamely from the first
Your bride, and all this fervour's run

to waste!

Do you know you speak sensibly to-
day?

The Earl's a fool.

- Aus.* Here's Thorold. Tell him so!
- Tresh.* [*Returning*]. Now, voices, voices! 'St! the lady's first!
- How seems he?—seems he not . . . come, faith give fraud
- The mercy-stroke whenever they engage!
- Down with fraud—up with faith!
- How seems the Earl?
- A name! a blazon! if you knew their worth,
- As you will never! come—the Earl?
- Guen.* He's young.
- Tresh.* What's she? an infant save in heart and brain.
- Young! Mildred is fourteen, remark!
- And you . . .
- Austin, how old is she?
- Guen.* There's tact for you!
- I meant that being young was good excuse
- If one should tax him . . .
- Tresh.* Well?
- Guen.* —With lacking wit.
- Tresh.* He lacked wit? Where might he lack wit, so please you?
- Guen.* In standing straighter than the steward's rod
- And making you the tiresomest harangues,
- Instead of slipping over to my side
- And softly whispering in my ear,
- "Sweet lady,
- "Your cousin there will do me detriment
- "He little dreams of—he's absorbed, I see,
- "In my old name and fame—be sure he'll leave
- "My Mildred, when his best account of me
- "Is ended, in full confidence I wear
- "My grandsire's periwig down either cheek.
- "I'm lost unless your gentleness vouchsafes" . . .
- Tresh.* . . . "To give a best of best accounts, yourself,
- "Of me and my demerits." You are right!
- He should have said what now I say for him.
- You golden creature, will you help us all?
- Here's Austin means to vouch for much, but you
- You are . . . what Austin only knows! Come up,
- All three of us—she's in the Library
- No doubt, for the day's wearing fast.
- Precede!
- Guen.* Austin, how we must—!
- Tresh.* Must what? Must speak truth,
- Malignant tongue! Detect one fault in him!
- I challenge you!
- Guen.* Witchcraft's a fault in him, For you're bewitched.
- Tresh.* What's urgent we obtain
- Is, that she soon receive him—say, to-morrow—
- Next day at farthest.
- Guen.* Ne'er instruct me!
- Tresh.* Come!
- He's out of your good graces since, forsooth.
- He stood not as he'd carry us by storm
- With his perfections! You're for the composed,
- Manly, assured, becoming confidence.
- Get her to say, "to-morrow," and I'll give you . . .
- I'll give you black Uganda, to be spoiled
- With petting and snail-paces. Will you? Come!
- SCENE III.—MILDRED'S Chamber.
A painted window overlooks the park. MILDRED and GUEN-DOLEN.
- Guen.* Now, Mildred, spare those pains. I have not left
- Our talkers in the Library, and climbed
- The wearisome ascent to this your bower
- In company with you,—I have not dared . . .

Nay, worked such prodigies as sparing
you

Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the
flood,

Which Thorold seemed in very act to
tell—

-Or bringing Austin to pluck up
that most

Firm-rooted heresy—your suitor's
eyes,

He would maintain, were grey in-
stead of blue—

I think I brought him to contrition!

-Well,

I have not done such things, (all to
deserve

A minute's quiet cousin's-talk with
you,)

To be dismissed so coolly!

Mil.

Guendolen,

What have I done . . . what could
suggest . . .

Guen.

There, there!

Do I not comprehend you'd be alone
To throw those testimonies in a heap,
Thorold's enlargings, Austin's bre-
vities,

With that poor, silly, heartless Guen-
dolen's

Ill-timed, misplaced, attempted smart-
nesses—

And sift their sense out? now, I come
to spare you

Nearly a whole night's labour. Ask
and have!

Demand, be answered! Lack I ears
and eyes?

Am I perplexed which side of the
rock-table

The Conqueror dined on when he
landed first,

Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden
take—

The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's
great meed?

Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes!

Mil.

My brother—

Did he . . . you said that he received
him well?

Guen. If I said only "well" I said
not much—

Oh, stay—which brother?

Mil. Thorold! who—-who else?

Guen. Thorold (a secret) is too
proud by half,—

Nay, hear me out—with us he's even
gentler

Than we are with our birds. Of this
great House

The least retainer that e'er caught his
glance

Would die for him, real dying—no
mere talk:

And in the world, the court, if men
would cite

The perfect spirit of honour, Thorold's
name

Rises of its clear nature to their
lips:

But he should take men's homage,
trust in it,

And care no more about what drew
it down.

He has desert, and that, acknowledg-
ment;

Is he content?

Mil. You wrong him, Guendolen.

Guen. He's proud, confess; so
proud with brooding o'er

The light of his interminable line,
An ancestry with men all paladins,

And women all . . .

Mil. Dear Guendolen, 'tis late!

When yonder purple pane the climb-
ing moon

Pierces, I know 'tis midnight.

Guen.

Well, that Thorold

Should rise up from such musings
and receive

One come audaciously to graft him-
self

Into this peerless stock, yet find no
flaw,

No slightest spot in such an one. . . .

Mil.

Who finds

A spot in Mertoun?

Guen.

Not your brother;

therefore,

Not the whole world.

Mil.

I'm weary, Guendolen.—

Bear with me!

Guen.

I am foolish.

Mil.

Oh, no, kind—

But I would rest.

Guen. Good night and rest to you.
I said how gracefully his mantle lay
Beneath the rings of his light hair?

Mil. Brown hair!

Guen. Brown? why it is brown—

how could you know that?

Mil. How? did not you—Oh,
Austin 'twas, declared
His hair was light, not brown—my
head!—and, look,

The moon-beam purpling the dark
chamber! Sweet,
Good night!

Guen. Forgive me—sleep the
soundlier for me!

[*Goes, she turns suddenly.*

Mildred!

Perdition! all's discovered.—Thorold
finds

That the Earl's greatest of all
grandmothers

Was grander daughter still—to that
fair dame

Whose garter slipped down at the
famous dance! [*Goes.*

Mil. Is she—can she be really gone
at last?

My heart—I shall not reach the
window! Needs

Must I have sinned much, so to
suffer!

[*She lifts the small lamp which is
suspended before the Virgin's
image in the window, and places
it by the purple pane. There!*

[*She returns to the seat in front.*

Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred, with
consent

Of all the world and Thorold,—Mer-
toun's bride!

Too late! 'Tis sweet to think of,
sweeter still

To hope for, that this blessed end
soothes up

The curse of the beginning; but I
know

It comes too late—'twill sweetest be
of all

To dream my soul away and die
upon! [*A noise without.*

The voice! Oh! why, why glided
in the snake

Into the Paradise Heaven meant us
both?

[*The window opens softly.—A low
voice sings.*

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so
purer than the purest;

And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and
her sure faith's the surest;

And her eyes are dark and humid, like the
depth on depth of lustre

Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier
than the wild-grape cluster,

Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her
neck's rose-misted marble;

Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's
bubbling, the bird's warble!

[*A figure wrapped in a mantle ap-
pears at the window.*

And this woman says, "My days were sun-
less and my nights were moonless,

"Parched the pleasant April herbage, and
the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,

"If you loved me not!" And I who—(ah,
for words of flame!) adore her!

Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate
palpably before her—

*He enters—approaches her seat, and
bends over her.*

I may enter at her portal soon, as now her
lattice takes me,

And by noontide as by midnight make her
mine, as hers she makes me!

[*The Earl throws off his slouched hat
and long cloak.*

My very heart sings, so I sing, be-
loved!

Mil. Sit, Henry—do not take my
hand.

Mer. 'Tis mine!

The meeting that appalled us both so
much

Is ended.

Mil. What begins now?

Mer. Happiness
Such as the world contains not.

Mil. That is it.
Our happiness would, as you say,

exceed
The whole world's best of blisses: we

—do we

Deserve that? Utter to your soul,
what mine

Long since, beloved, has grown used
to hear,

Like a death-knell, so much regarded
once,

And so familiar now : this will not
be !

Mer. Oh, Mildred, have I met your
brother's face,

Compelled myself if not to speak
untruth,

Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside
The truth, as what had e'er prevailed

on me

Save you, to venture ? Have I gained
at last

Your brother, the one scarer of your
dreams,

And waking thoughts' sole apprehension too ?

Does a new life, like a young sunrise,
break

On the strange unrest of our night,
confused

With rain and stormy flaw—and will
you see

No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted
drops

On each live spray, no vapour steaming
up,

And no expressless glory in the east ?
When I am by you, to be ever by you.

When I have won you and may
worship you,

Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will
not be ?"

Mil. Sin has surprised us ; so will
punishment.

Mer. No—me alone, who sinned
alone !

Mil. The night

You likened our past life to—was it
storm

Throughout to you then, Henry ?

Mer. Of your life

I spoke—what am I, what my life, to
waste

A thought about when you are by
me?—you

It was, I said my folly called the
storm

And pulled the night upon.—'Twas
day with me—

Perpetual dawn with me.

Mil. Come what, come will,

You have been happy—take my
hand !

Mer. [After a pause.] How good
Your brother is ! I figured him a
cold

Shall I say, haughty man ?

Mil. They told me all.

I know all.

Mer. It will soon be over.

Mil. Over ?

Oh, what is over ? what must I live
thro'

And say, "'tis over ?" Is our meet-
ing over ?

Have I received in presence of them
all

The partner of my guilty love,—with
brow

Trying to seem a maiden's brow
with lips

Which make believe that when they
strive to form

Replies to you and tremble as they
strive,

It is the nearest ever they approached
A stranger's . . . Henry, yours that

stranger's . . . lip

With cheek that looks a virgin's, and
that is . . .

Ah, God ! some prodigy of thine will
stop

This planned piece of deliberate
wickedness

In its birth even—some fierce leprous
spot

Will mar the brow's dissimulating—I
shall murmur no smooth speeches

got by heart,

But, frenzied, pour forth all our woe-
ful story,

The love, the shame, and the despair
—with them

Round me aghast as men round some
cursed fount

That should spirt water, and spouts
blood. I'll not

. . . Henry, you do not wish that I
should draw

This vengeance down ? I'll not affect
a grace

That's gone from me—gone once, and
gone for ever !

Mer. Mildred, my honour is your own. I'll share

Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.
A word informs your brother I retract
This morning's offer; time will yet
bring forth

Some better way of saving both of us.

Mil. I'll meet their faces, Mertoun!

Mer. When? to-morrow
Get done with it!

Mil. Oh, Henry, not to-morrow!
Next day! I never shall prepare my
words

And looks and gestures sooner!

How you must

Despise me!

Mer. Mildred, break it if you
choose,

A heart the love of you uplifted—still
Uplifts, thro' this protracted agony,
To Heaven! but, Mildred, answer
me,—first pace

The chamber with me—once again—
now, say

Calmly the part, the . . . what it is
of me

You see contempt (for you did say
contempt)

—Contempt for you in! I would pluck
it off

And cast it from me!—but no—no,
you'll not

Repeat that?—will you, Mildred, re-
peat that?

Mil. Dear Henry—

Mer. I was scarce a boy—
e'en now

What am I more? And you were
infantine

When first I met you why, your
hair fell loose

On either side!—my fool's cheek
reddens now

Only in the recalling how it burned
That morn to see the shape of many a
dream

—You know we boys are prodigal of
charms

To her we dream of—I had heard of
one,

Had dreamed of her, and I was close
to her,

Might speak to her, might live and
die her own,

Who knew?—I spoke—Oh, Mildred,
feel you not

That now, while I remember every
glance

Of yours, each word of yours, with
power to test

And weigh them in the diamond
scales of Pride,

Resolved the treasure of a first and last
Heart's love shall have been bartered
at its worth,

—That now I think upon your purity
And utter ignorance of guilt—your
own

Or other's guilt—the girlish undis-
guised

Delight at a strange novel prize—(I
talk

A silly language, but interpret, you!)
If I, with fancy at its full, and reason
Scarce in its germ, enjoined you
secrecy,

If you had pity on my passion, pity
On my protested sickness of the soul
To sit beside you, hear you breathe,
and watch

Your eyelids and the eyes beneath
if you

Accorded gifts and knew not they
were gifts—

If I grew mad at last with enterprise
And must behold my beauty in her
bower

Or perish—(I was ignorant of even
My own desires—what then were
you?) if sorrow—

Sin—if the end came—must I now
renounce

My reason, blind myself to light, say
truth

Is false and lie to God and my own
soul?

Contempt were all of this!

Mil. Do you believe . . .

Or, Henry, I'll not wrong you— you
believe

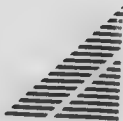
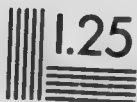
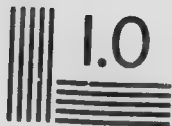
That I was ignorant. I scarce grieve
o'er

The past! We'll love on—you will
love me still!



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Mer. Oh, to love less what one
has injured! Dove,
Whose pinion I have rashly hurt, my
breast—
Shall my heart's warmth not nurse
thee into strength?
Flower I have crushed, shall I not
care for thee?
Bloom o'er my crest my fight-mark
and device!

Mildred, I love you and you love me!

Mil. Go!

Be that your last word. I shall sleep
to-night.

Mer. This is not our last meeting?

Mil. One night more.

Mer. And then—think, then!

Mil. Then, no sweet
courtship-days,

No dawning consciousness of love for
us,

No strange and palpitating births of
sense

From words and looks, no innocent
fears and hopes,

Reserves and confidences: morning's
over!

Mer. How else should love's per-
fected noontide follow?

All the dawn promised shall the day
perform.

Mil. So may it be! but—

You are cautious, love?
Are sure that unobserved you scaled
the walls?

Mer. Oh, trust me! Then our
final meeting's fixed?

To-morrow night?

Mil. Farewell! Stay, Henry
. . . wherefore?

His foot is on the yew-tree bough—
the turf

Receives him—now the moonlight as
he runs

Embraces him—but he must go—is
gone—

Ah, once again he turns—thanks,
thanks, my love!

He's gone—Oh, I'll believe him every
word!

I was so young—I loved him so—I
had

No mother—God forgot me—and I
fell.

There may be pardon yet—all's doubt
beyond.

Surely the bitterness of death is past!

ACT II

SCENE.—*The Library.*

Enter LORD TRESHAM hastily.

This way—In, Gerard, quick!

[*As GERARD enters TRESHAM
secures the door.*

Now speak! or, wait—

I'll bid you speak directly. [*Sits
himself.*

Now repeat

Firmly and circumstantially the tale
You've just now told me; it eludes
me: either

I did not listen, or the half is gone
Away from me—How long have you
lived here?

Here in my house, your father kept
our woods

Before you?

Ger. —As his father did, my lord.
I have been eating sixty years, almost,
Your bread.

Tresh. Yes, yes—You ever were
of all

The servants in my father's house, I
know.

The trusted one. You'll speak the
truth.

Ger. I'll speak
God's truth: night after night . . .

Tresh. Since when?

Ger. At least

A month—each midnight has some
man access

To Lady Mildred's chamber.
Tresh. Tush, "access"

No wide words like "access" to me!

Ger. He runs
Along the woodside, crosses to the
south,

Takes the left tree that ends the
avenue . . .

Tresh. The last great yew-tree?

Ger. You might stand upon
The main boughs like a platform
. . . Then he . . .

Tresh. Quick!
Ger. . . . Climbs up, and, where
they lessen at the top,

--I cannot see distinctly, but he
throws,

I think—for this I do not vouch—a
line

That reaches to the Lady's casement—
Tresh. Which

He enters not! Gerard—some
wretched fool

Dares pry into my sister's privacy!
When such are young, it seems a
precious thing

To have approached,—to merely have
approached,

Got sight of, the abode of her they set
Their frantic thoughts upon! He
does not enter?

Gerard?

Ger. There is a lamp that's full in
the midst,
Under a red square in the painted
glass

Of Lady Mildred's . . .

Tresh. Leave that name
out! Well?

That lamp?

Ger. Is moved at midnight
higher up
To one pane—a small dark-blue pane
—he waits

For that among the boughs; at sight
of that,

I see him, plain as I see you, my lord,
Open the Lady's casement, enter
there . . .

Tresh. —And stay?

Ger. An hour, two hours.

Tresh. And this you saw
Once?—twice?—quick!

Ger. Twenty times.

Tresh. And what brings you
Under the yew-trees?

Ger. The first night I left
My range so far, to track the stranger
stag

That broke the pale, I saw the man.

Tresh.

Yet sent
No cross-bow shaft thro' the mar-
auder?

Ger.

But
He came, my lord, the first time he
was seen,

In a great moonlight, light as any day,
From Lady Mildred's chamber.

Tresh. [After a pause.] You have
no cause—

--Who could have cause to do my
sister wrong?

Ger. Oh, my lord, only once—let
me this once

Speak what is on my mind! Since
first I noted

All this, I've groaned as if a fiery net
Plucked me this way and that—fire,
if I turned

To her, fire if I turned to you, and
fire,

If down I flung myself and strove to
die.

The lady could not have been seven
years old

When I was trusted to conduct her
safe

Thro' the deer-herd to stroke the
snow-white fawn

I brought to eat bread from her tiny
hand

Within a month. She ever had a
smile

To greet me with—she . . . if it
could undo

What's done to lop each limb from
off this trunk . . .

All that is foolish talk, not fit for
you—

I mean, I could not speak and bring
her hurt

For Heaven's compelling: but when
I was fixed

To hold my peace, each morsel of
your food

Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-
place too,

Choked me. I wish I had grown
mad in doubts

What it behoved me do. This morn
it seemed

Either I must confess to you, or die:

Now it is done, I seem the vilest worm
That crawls, to have betrayed my
Lady!

Tresh.

No—

No—Gerard!

Ger. Let me go!

Tresh. A man, you say

What man? Young? Not a vulgar
hind? What dress?

Ger. A slouched hat and a large
dark foreign cloak

Wraps his whole form: even his face
is hid;

But I should judge him young; no
hind, be sure!

Tresh. Why?

Ger. He is ever armed: his sword
projects

Beneath the cloak.

Tresh. Gerard,—I will not say
No word, no breath of this!

Ger. Thanks, thanks, my lord!

[*Goes.*]

[*TRESHAM paces the room. After a
pause,*

Oh, thought's absurd!—as with some
monstrous fact

That, when ill thoughts beset us,
seems to give

Merciful God that made the sun and
stars,

The waters and the green delights of
earth,

The lie! I apprehend the monstrous
fact—

Yet know the Maker of all worlds is
good,

And yield my reason up, inadequate
To reconcile what yet I do behold—

Blasting my sense! There's cheerful
day outside—

This is my library—and this the chair
My father used to sit in carelessly,
After his soldier-fashion, while I stood
Between his knees to question him—
and here,

Gerard, our grey retainer,—as he says,
Fed with our food from sire to son
an age.—

Has told a story—I am to believe!

That Mildred . . . oh, no, no! both
tales are true.

Her pure cheek's story and the
forester's!

Would she, or could she, err—much
less, confound

All guilts of treachery, of craft, of
. . . Heaven

Keep me within its hand!—I will sit
here

Until thought settles and I see my
course.

Avert, oh God, only this woe from
me!

[*As he sinks his head between his
arms on the table, GUENDOLEN'S
voice is heard at the door.*

Lord Tresham! [*She knocks.*] Is
Lord Tresham there?

[*TRESHAM, hastily turning, pulls
down the first book above him and
opens it.*

Tresh. Come in! [*She enters.*

Ah, Guendolen—good morning.

Guen. Nothing more?

Tresh. What should I say more?

Guen. Pleasant question! more?

This more! Did I besiege poor
Mildred's brain

Last night till close on morning with
"the Earl"—

"The Earl"—whose worth did I
asseverate

Till I am very fain to hope that . . .
Thorold,

What is all this? You are not well!
Tresh. Who, I?

You laugh at me.

Guen. Has what I'm fain to hope
Arrived, then? Does that huge
tome show some blot

In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no
longer back

Than Arthur's time?

Tresh. When left you Mil-
dred's chamber?

Guen. Oh late enough, I told you!
The main thing

To ask is, how I left her chamber,—
sure,

Content yourself, she'll grant this
paragon

Of Earls no such ungracious . . .

Tresh. Send her here!

Guen. Thorold?

Tresh. I mean—acquaint her,

Guendolen, —

—But mildly!

Guen. Mildly?

Tresh. Ah, you guess'd aright!
I am not well—there is no hiding it.
But tell her I would see her at her
leisure—

That is, at once! here in the Library!
The passage in that old Italian book
We hunted for so long is found, say,
—found—

And if I let it slip again . . . you
see,

That she must come—and instantly!

Guen. I'll die
Piecemeal, record that, if there have
not gloomed

Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!

Tresh. Go! or, Guendolen,
Be you at call,—with Austin, if you
choose,—

In the adjoining gallery—There, go!

[GUENDOLEN goes.
Another lesson to me! you might
bid

A child disguise his heart's sore, and
conduct

Some sly investigation point by point
With a smooth brow, as well as bid
me catch

The inquisitorial cleverness some
praise!

If you had told me yesterday, "There's
one

"You needs must circumvent and
practise with,

"Entrap by policies, if you would
worm

"The truth out—and that one is—
Mildred!" There—

There—reasoning is thrown away
on it!

Prove she's unchaste . . . why you
may after prove

That she's a poisoner, traitress, what
you will!

Where I can comprehend nought,
nought's to say.

Or do, or think! Force on me but
the first

Abomination, — then outpour all
plagues,
And I shall ne'er make count of them!

Enter MILDRED.

Mil. What book
Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen
Thought you were pale—you are not
pale! That book?

That's Latin surely!

Tresh. Mildred—here's a line—
(Don't lean on me—I'll English it
for you)

"Love conquers all things." What
love conquers them?

What love should you esteem—best
love?

Mil. True love.

Tresh. I mean, and should have
said, whose love is best

Of all that love or that profess to
love?

Mil. The list's so long—there's
father's, mother's, husband's . . .

Tresh. Mildred, I do believe a
brother's love

For a sole sister must exceed them all!

For see now, only see! there's no
alloy

Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st
gold

Of other loves—no gratitude to claim;
You never gave her life—not even

auglit

That keeps life—never tended her,
instructed,

Enriched her—so your love can claim
no right

O'er hers save pure love's claim—
that's what I call

Freedom from earthliness. You'll
never hope

To be such friends, for instance, she
and you,

As when you hunted cowslips in the
woods,

Or played together in the meadow
hay.

Oh yes—with age, respect comes, and
your worth

Is felt, there's growing sympathy of
tastes,

There's ripened friendship, there's confirmed esteem,
 Much head these make against the new-comer!
 The startling apparition—the strange youth—
 Whom one half-hour's conversing with, or, say,
 Mere gazing at, shall change (beyond all change
 This Ovid ever sang about!) your soul
 . . . *Her* soul, that is,—the sister's soul! With her
 'Twas winter yesterday; now, all is warmth.
 The green leaf's springing and the turtle's voice,
 "Arise and come away!" Come whither?—far
 Enough from the esteem, respect, and all
 The brother's somewhat insignificant
 Array of rights! all which he knows before—
 Has calculated on so long ago!
 I think such love, (apart from yours and mine,)
 Contented with its little term of life,
 Intending to retire betimes, aware
 How soon the background must be place for it,
 I think, am sure, a brother's love exceeds
 All the world's loves in its unworldliness.
Mil. What is this for?
Tresh. This, Mildred, is it for!
 Oh, no, I cannot go to it so soon!
 That's one of many points my haste left out—
 Each day, each hour throws forth its silk-slight film
 Between the being tied to you by birth,
 And you, until those slender threads compose
 A web that shrouds her daily life of hopes
 And fears and fancies, all her life, from yours—
 So close you live and yet so far apart!

And must I rend this web, tear up, break down
 The sweet and palpitating mystery
 That makes her sacred? You—for you I mean,
 Shall I speak—shall I not speak?
Mil. Speak!
Tresh. I will.
 Is there a story men could—any man
 Could tell of you, you would conceal from me?
 I'll never think there's falsehood on that lip!
 Say, "There is no such story men could tell,"
 And I'll believe you, tho' I disbelieve
 The world . . . the world of better men than I,
 And women such as I suppose you—
 Speak!
 [After a pause.] Not speak? Explain then! clear it up, then! Move
 Some of the miserable weight away
 That presses lower than the grave!
 Not speak?
 Some of the dead weight, Mildred!
 Ah, if I
 Could bring myself to plainly make their charge
 Against you! Must I, Mildred? Silent still?
 [After a pause.] Is there a gallant that has night by night
 Admittance to your chamber?
 [After a pause.] Then, his name!
 Till now, I only had a thought for you—
 But now,—his name!
Mil. Thorold, do you devise
 Fit expiation for my guilt, if fit
 There be! 'tis nought to say that I'll endure
 And bless you,—that my spirit yearns to purge
 Her stains off in the fierce renewing fire—
 But do not plunge me into other guilt!
 Oh, guilt enough! I cannot tell his name.

Tresh. Then judge yourself! How should I act? Pronounce!

Mil. Oh, Thorold, you must never tempt me thus!

To die here in this chamber by that sword

Would seem like punishment—so should I glide

Like an arch-cheat, into extremest bliss!

'Twere easily arranged for me! but you—

What would become of you?

Tresh. And what will now become of me? I'll hide your shame and mine

From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts

Under the marble of our chapel-floor; They cannot rise and blast you! You may wed

Your paramour above our mother's tomb;

Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot.

We two will somehow wear this one day out:

But with to-morrow hastens here—the Earl!

The youth without suspicion that faces come

From Heaven, and hearts from . . . whence proceed such hearts?

I have despatched last night at your command

A missive bidding him present himself

To-morrow here—thus much is said—the rest

Is understood as if 'twere written down—

“His suit finds favour in your eyes,”—now dictate

This morning's letter that shall countermand

Last night's—do dictate that!

Mil. But, Thorold—if I will receive him as I said?

Tresh. *The Earl?*

Mil. I will receive him!

Tresh. [Starting up.] Ho there! Guendolen!

GUENDOLEN and AUSTIN enter.

And, Austin, you are welcome too! Look there!

The woman there!

Aus. and Guen. How? Mildred?

Tresh. Mildred once!

Now the receiver night by night, when sleep

Blesses the inmates of her father's house,

—I say, the soft sly wanton that receives

Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof which holds

You, Guendolen, you, Austin, and has held

A thousand Treshams—never one like her!

No lighter of the signal lamp her quick Foul breath near quenches in hot

eagerness

To mix with breath as foul! no loosener

Of the lattice, practised in the stealthy tread,

The low voice and the noiseless come-and-go!

Not one composer of the Bacchant's mien

Into—what you thought Mildred's, in a word!

Know her!

Guen. Oh, Mildred, look to me, at least!

Thorold—she's dead, I'd say, but that she stands

Rigid as stone and whiter!

Tresh. You have heard . . .

Guen. Too much! you must proceed no further!

Mil. Yes—Proceed—All's truth! Go from me!

Tresh. All is truth, She tells you! Well, you know, or ought to know,

All this I would forgive in her. I'd con

Each precept the harsh world enjoins. I'd take

Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one.

I'd bind myself before them to exact
 The prescribed vengeance—and one
 word of hers,
 The sight of her, the bare least
 memory
 Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's
 pride
 Above all prides, my all in all so long,
 Had scattered every trace of my re-
 solve!
 What were it silently to waste away
 And see her waste away from this
 day forth,
 Two scathed things with leisure to
 repent,
 And grow acquainted with the grave,
 and die,
 Tired out if not at peace, and be
 forgotten?
 It were not so impossible to bear!
 But this—that, fresh from last night's
 pledge renewed
 Of love with the successful gallant
 there,
 She'll calmly bid me help her to
 entice,
 Inveigle an unconscious trusting youth
 Who thinks her all that's chaste, and
 good, and pure,
 —Invite me to betray him . . . who
 so fit
 As honour's self to cover shame's arch-
 deed?
 —That she'll receive Lord Mertoun
 —(her own phrase)—
 This, who could bear? Why, you
 have heard of thieves,
 Stabbers, the earth's disgrace—who
 yet have laughed,
 "Talk not of tortures to me—I'll
 betray
 "No comrade I've pledged faith to!"
 —you have heard
 Of wretched women—all but Mildreds
 —tied
 By wild illicit ties to losels vile
 You'd tempt them to forsake; and
 they'll reply
 "Gold, friends, repute, I left for him.
 I have
 "In him, why should I leave him
 then for gold,

"Repute, or friends?" — and you
 have felt your heart
 Respond to such poor outcasts of the
 world
 As to so many friends; bad as you
 please,
 You've felt they were God's men and
 women still,
 So not to be disowned by you! but
 she,
 That stands there, calmly gives her
 lover up
 As means to wed the Earl that she
 may hide
 Their intercourse the surelier! and,
 for this,
 I curse her to her face before you all!
 Shame hunt her from the earth!
 Then Heaven do right
 To both! It hears me now—shall
 judge her then!
[As MILDRED faints and falls,
TRESHAM rushes out.
Aus. Stay, Tresham, we'll accom-
 pany you!
Guen. We?
 What, and leave Mildred? We?
 why, where's my place
 But by her side, and where's yours
 but by mine?
 Mildred—one word—only look at me,
 then!
Aus. No, Guendolen! I echo
 Thorold's voice!
 She is unworthy to behold . . .
Guen. Us two?
 If you spoke on reflection, and if I
 Approved your speech—if you (to put
 the thing
 At lowest) you, the soldier, bound to
 make
 The King's cause yours, and fight for
 it, and throw
 Regard to others of its right or wrong,
 —If with a death-white woman you
 can help,
 Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred,
 You left her—or if I, her cousin, friend
 This morning, playfellow but yester-
 day,
 Who've said, or thought at least a
 thousand times,

"I'd serve you if I could," should
 now face round
 And say, "Ah, that's to only signify
 "I'd serve you while you're fit to
 serve yourself—
 "So long as fifty eyes await the turn
 "Of yours to forestall its yet half-
 formed wish,
 "I'll proffer my assistance you'll not
 need—
 "When every tongue is praising you,
 I'll join
 "The praisers' chorus - when you're
 hemmed about
 "With lives between you and de-
 traction—lives
 "To be laid down if a rude voice,
 rash eye,
 "Rough hand should violate the
 sacred ring
 "Their worship throws about you,
 —then indeed,
 "Who'll stand up for you stout as
 I?" If so
 We said and so we did,—not Mildred
 there
 Would be unworthy to behold us both,
 But we should be unworthy, both of
 us,
 To be beheld by—by—your meanest
 dog,
 Which, if that sword were broken in
 your face
 Before a crowd, that badge torn off
 your breast,
 And you cast out with hootings and
 contempt,
 —Would push his way thro' all the
 hooters, gain
 Your side, go off with you and all
 your shame
 To the next ditch you chose to die in!
 Austin,
 Do you love me? Here's Austin,
 Mildred,—here's
 Your brother says he does not believe
 half—
 No, nor half that—of all he heard!
 He says,
 Look up and take his hand!
Aus. Look up and take
 My hand, dear Mildred!

Mil. I—I was so young!
 Beside, I loved him, Thorold—and I
 had
 No mother—God forgot me—so I
 fell!
Guen. Mildred!
Mil. Require no further!
 Did I dream
 That I could palliate what is done?
 All's true.
 Now, punish me! A woman takes
 my hand!
 Let go my hand! You do not know,
 I see—
 I thought that Thorold told you.
Guen. What is this?
 Where start you to?
Mil. Oh Austin, loosen me!
 You heard the whole of it - your eyes
 were worse,
 In their surprise, than Thorold's!
 Oh, unless
 You stay to execute his sentence, loose
 My hand! Has Thorold gone, and
 are you here?
Guen. Here, Mildred, we two
 friends of yours will wait
 Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or
 muse!
 Only, when you shall want your
 bidding done,
 How can we do it if we are not by?
 Here's Austin waiting patiently your
 will!
 One spirit to command, and one to
 love
 And to believe in it and do its
 best,
 Poor as that is, to help it—why, the
 world
 Has been won many a time, its length
 and breadth,
 By just such a beginning!
Mil. I believe
 If once I threw my arms about your
 neck
 And sunk my head upon your breast,
 that I
 Should weep again!
Guen. Let go her hand now, Austin.
 Wait for me.—Pace the gallery and
 think

On the world's seemings and realities
Until I call you. [AUSTIN goes.]

Mil. No—I cannot weep!
No more tears from this brain—no
sleep—no tears!

O Guendolen, I love you!

Guen. Yes: and "love"
Is a short word that says so very much!
It says that you confide in me.

Mil. Confide!

Guen. Your lover's name, then!

I've so much to learn,
Ere I can work in your behalf!

Mil. My friend,
You know I cannot tell his name.

Guen. At least
He is your lover? and you love him
too?

Mil. Ah, do you ask me that?—
but I am fallen

So low!

Guen. You love him still, then?

Mil. My sole prop
Against the guilt that crushes me!

I say,
Each night ere I lie down, "I was
so young—

"I had no mother—and I loved him
!"

And then God seems indulgent, and
I dare

Trust Him my soul in sleep.

Guen. How could you let us
E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun
then?

Mil. There is a cloud around me.

Guen. But you said
You would receive his suit in spite
of this?

Mil. I say there is a cloud . . .

Guen. No cloud to me!
Lord Mertoun and your lover are the
same!

Mil. What maddest fancy . . .

Guen. [Calling aloud.] Austin!
(Spare your pains—

When I have got a truth, that truth I
keep)—

Mil. By all you love, sweet Guen-
dolen, forbear!

Have I confided in you . . .

Guen. Just for this!

Austin!—Oh, not to guess it at the
first!

But I *did* guess it—that is, I divined
Felt by an instinct how it was—why else
Should I pronounce you free from all
that heap

Of sins which had been irredeemable?
I felt they were not yours—what other
way

Than this, not yours? The secret's
wholly mine!

Mil. If you would see me die before
his face . . .

Guen. I'd hold my peace! And if
the Earl returns

To-night?

Mil. Ah, Heaven, he's lost!

Guen. I thought so! Austin!

Enter AUSTIN.

Oh, where have you been hiding?

Aus. Thorold's gone,
I know not how, across the meadow-
land.

I watched him till I lost him in the
skirts

Of the beech-wood.

Guen. Gone? All thwarts us!

Mil. Thorold too?

Guen. I have thought. First lead
this Mildred to her room.

Go on the other side: and then we'll
seek

Your brother; and I'll tell you, by
the way,

The greatest comfort in the world.
You said

There was a clew to all. Remember,
sweet,

He said there was a clew! I hold it
Come!

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The end of the Yew-
tree Avenue under MILDRED'S
window. A light seen through
a central red pane.*

Enter TRESHAM through the trees.

Again here! But I cannot lose myself.
The heath—the orchard—I have tra-
versed glades

And dells and bosky paths which used
to lead
Into green wild-wood depths, be-
wildering
My boy's adventurous step; and now
they tend
Hither or soon or late; the blackest
shade
Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the
trees ope wide,
And the dim turret I have fled from
fronts
Again my step; the very river put
Its arm about me and conducted me
To this detested spot. Why then,
I'll shun
Their will no longer do your will
with me!
Oh, bitter! To have reared a tower-
ing scheme
Of happiness, and to behold it
razed,
Were nothing: all men hope, and
see their hopes
Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and
hope anew:
But I . . . to hope that from a line
like ours
No horrid prodigy like this would
spring,
Were just as though I hoped that
from these old
Confederates against the sovereign
day,
Children of older and yet older
sires
(Whose living coral berries dropped,
as now
On me, on many a baron's surcoat
once,
On many a beauty's wimple) would
proceed
No poison-tree, to thrust, from Hell
its root,
Hither and thither its strange snaky
arms.
Why came I here? What must I do?
—[A bell strikes.]—A bell?
Midnight! and 'tis at midnight . . .
Ah, I catch
—Woods, river, plains, I catch your
meaning now

And I obey you! Hlist! This tree
will serve!
[He retires behind one of the trees.
After a pause, enter MERTOUN
cloaked as before.
Mer. Not time! Beat out thy
last voluptuous beat
Of hope and fear, my heart! I
thought the clock
In the chapel struck as I was pushing
thro'
The ferns. And so I shall no more
see rise
My love-star! Oh, no matter for the
past!
So much the more delicious task to see
Mildred revive: to pluck out, thorn
by thorn,
All traces of the rough forbidden path
My rash love lured her to! Each day
must see
Some fear of hers effaced, some hope
renewed!
Then there will be surprises, unfore-
seen
Delights in store. I'll not regret the
past!
[The light is placed above in the
purple pane.
And see, my signal rises! Mildred's
star!
I never saw it lovelier than now
It rises for the last time! If it
sets,
'Tis that the re-assuring sun may
dawn!
[Is he prepares to ascend the last
tree of the avenue, TRESHAM
arrests his arm.
Unhand me—peasant, by your grasp!
Here's gold.
'Twas a mad freak of mine. I said
I'd pluck
A branch from the white-blossomed
shrub beneath
The casement there! Take this, and
hold your peace.
Tresh. Into the moonlight yonder,
come with me!
—Out of the shadow!
Mer. I am armed, fool!
Tresh. Yes,

- Or no? Wouldst thou enter into the light, ' We should join hands in frantic sympathy.
- My hand is on your throat—refuse! If you can't stifle me the unteachable, I explained how you can live—want, so fast!
- Where have I heard of a man that was mild and slow? Who'll help I can, despite my sin.
- I'll come with you! [*Tresham*] The old belief—that like you is still impossible!—Now draw!
- Tresh.* You're armed—that's well. *Mer.* Not for my sake, but I entreat a hearing—for your sake.
- Your name—what are you? And most, for her sake!
- Mer.* (Tresham!)—he is Lord Tresham! Oh, silent? Do you know, you bear yourself
- Exactly as, in curious dreams I've had like yourself,
- How felon, this wild earth is full of, look
- When they've detected, still your kind has looked!
- The bravo holds an assured countenance,
- The thief is voluble and plausible, But silently the slave of lust has crouched
- When I have fancied it before a man! Your name?
- Mer.* I do conjure Lord Tresham—ay,
- Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail— That he for his own sake forbear to ask
- My name! As Heaven's above, his future weal
- Or woe depends upon my silence! Vain!
- I read your white inexorable face! Know me, Lord Tresham! [*He throws off his disguises.*
- Tresh.* Mertoun! *Mer.* Draw now!
- [*A pause.*] *Mer.* Hear me
- But speak first!
- Tresh.* Not one least word on your life!
- Be sure that I will strangle in your throat
- The last word that informs me how you live
- And yet seem what you seem! No doubt 'twas you
- Taught Mildred still to keep that face and sin!
- If you can't stifle me the unteachable, I explained how you can live—want, so fast!
- Who'll help I can, despite my sin.
- The old belief—that like you is still impossible!—Now draw!
- Mer.* Not for my sake, but I entreat a hearing—for your sake.
- And most, for her sake!
- Tresh.* Ha, ha, what should I know of your ways? A miscreant like yourself,
- How must one rouse his ire? A blow?—that's pride
- No doubt, to him! one spurns him, does one not.
- Or sets the foot upon his mouth—or spits
- Into his face! Come—which, or all of these?
- Mer.* 'Twixt him, and me, and Mildred, Heaven be judge!
- Can I avoid this? Have your will, my Lord!
- [*He draws, and, after a few passes, falls.*
- Tresh.* You are not hurt?
- Mer.* You'll hear me now!
- Tresh.* But rise!
- Mer.* Ah, Tresham, say I not "you'll hear me now!"
- And what procures a man the right to speak
- In his defence before his fellow-man, But—I suppose—the thought that presently
- He may have leave to speak before his God
- His whole defence?
- Tresh.* Not hurt? It cannot be!
- You made no effort to resist me. Where
- Did my sword reach you? Why not have returned
- My thrusts? Hurt where?
- Mer.* My lord—
- Tresh.* How young he is!

Mer. Lord Tresham, I am very young, and yet I have entangled other lives with mine
Do let me speak—and do believe my speech,
That when I die before you presently.

Tresh. Can you stay here till I return with help?

Mer. Oh, stay by me! When I was less than boy I did you grievous wrong, and knew it not

Upon my honour, knew it not! Once known,

I could not find what seemed a better way

To right you than I took: my life you feel

How less than nothing had been giving you

The life you've taken? But I thought my way

The better—only for your sake and hers.

And as you have decided otherwise, Would I had an infinity of lives To offer you!—now say—instruct me—think!

Can you from out the minutes I have left

Eke out my reparation? Oh—think—think!

For I must wring a partial—dare I say, Forgiveness from you, ere I die?

Tresh. I do forgive you.

Mer. Wait and ponder that great word!

Because, if you forgive me, I shall hope To speak to you of—Mildred!

Tresh. Mertoun,—haste And anger have undone us. 'Tis not you

Should tell me for a novelty you're young—

Thoughtless—unable to recall the past!

Be but your pardon ample as my own!

Mer. Ah, Tresham, that a sword-stroke and a drop

Of blood or two, should bring all this about!

Why, 'twas my very fear of you—my love

Of you—(what passion's like a boy's for one

Like you?)—that ruined me! I dreamed of you—

You, all accomplished, courted everywhere,

The scholar and the gentleman. I burned

To knit myself to you—but I was young,

And your surpassing reputation kept me

So far aloof—oh, wherefore all that love?

With less of love, my glorious yesterday

Of praise and gentle words and kindest looks,

I had taken place perchance six months ago!

Even now—how happy we had been! And yet

I know the thought of this escaped you, Tresham!

Let me look up into your face—I feel 'Tis changed above me—yet my eyes are glazed.

Where? where?

[*As he endeavours to raise himself, his eye catches the lamp.*

Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred do?

Tresham, her life is bound up in the life

That's bleeding fast away!—I'll live—must live,

There! if you'll only turn me I shall live

And save her! Tresham—oh, had you but heard!

Had you but heard! What right have you to set

The thoughtless foot upon her life and mine,

And then say, as we perish, "Had I thought,

"All had gone otherwise." We've sinned and die:

Never you sin, Lord Tresham!—for
you'll die.

And God will judge you.

Tresh. Yes, be satisfied—
That process is begun.

Mer. And she sits there
Waiting for me. Now, say you this
to her.

You not another—say, I saw him
die.

As he breathed this—"I love her"—
you don't know.

What those three small words mean)
say, I love her.

Lowers me down the bloody slope to
death.

With memories . . . I speak to her
—not you.

Who had no pity—will have no re-
morse,

Perchance intend her . . . Die along
with me,

Dear Mildred!—'tis so easy—and
you'll 'scape.

So much unkindness! Can I lie at
rest.

With rude speech spoken to you,
ruder deeds.

Done to you—heartless men to have
my heart,

And I tied down with grave-clothes
and the worm,

Aware, perhaps, of every blow—Oh
God!—

Upon those lips—yet of no power to
tear.

The felon stripe by stripe? Die,
Mildred! Leave

Their honourable world to them—for
God.

We're good enough, tho' the world
casts us out!

[A whistle is heard.]

Tresh. Ho, Gerard!

*Enter GERARD, AUSTIN, and GUEN-
DOLEN, with lights.*

No one speak! you see what's
done!

I cannot hear another voice!

Mer. There's light—
Light all about me and I move to it.

Tresham, did I not tell you—did you
not

Just promise to deliver words of mine
To Mildred?

Tresh. I will bear those words
to her.

Mer. Now?

Tresh. Now! Lift you the body,
Gerard, and leave me
The head.

[As they have half raised MERTOUN, he turns suddenly.]

Mer. I knew they turned me—
turn me not from her!

There! stay you! there! [*Dies.*]

Guen. [After a pause.] Austin,
remain you here.

With Thorold until Gerard comes
with help—

Then lead him to his chamber. I
must go.

To Mildred.

Tresh. Guendolen, I hear each
word.

You utter—did you hear him bid me
give

His message? Did you hear my
promise? I,

And only I, see Mildred!

Guen. She will die.

Tresh. Oh no, she will not die! I
dare not hope.

She'll die. What ground have you to
think she'll die?

Why, Austin's with you!

Aus. Had we but arrived

Before you fought!

Tresh. There was no fight at all!
He let me slaughter him—the boy!—

I'll trust

The body there to you and Gerard
thus!

Now bear him on before me.

Aus. Whither bear him?

Tresh. Oh, to my chamber. When
we meet there next,

We shall be friends.

[They bear out the body of

MERTOUN.]

Will she die, Guendolen?

Guen. Where are you taking me?

Tresh. He fell just here!

Now answer me. Shall you in your whole life
 —You who have nought to do with Mertoun's fate,
 Now you have seen his breast upon the turf,
 Shall you e'er walk this way if you can help?
 When you and Austin wander arm in arm
 Thro' our ancestral grounds, will not a shade
 Be ever on the meadow and the waste—
 Another kind of shade than when the night
 Shuts the woodside with all its whispers up!
 But will you ever so forget his breast
 As willingly to cross this bloody turf
 Under the black yew avenue? That's well!
 You turn your head! and I then?—
Guen. What is done
 Is done! My care is for the living.
 Thorold,
 Bear up against this burthen—more remains
 To set the neck to!
Tresh. Dear and ancient trees
 My fathers planted, and I loved so well!
 What have I done that, like some fabled crime
 Of yore, lets loose a fury leading thus
 Her miserable dance amidst you all?
 Oh, never more for me shall winds intone
 With all your tops a vast antiphony,
 Demanding and responding in God's praise!
 Hers ye are now—not mine! Farewell—Farewell!

SCENE II.—MILDRED'S Chamber.
 MILDRED alone.

He comes not! I have heard of those
 who seemed
 Resourceless in prosperity,—you
 thought

Sorrow might slay them when she
 listed—yet
 Did they so gather up their diffused
 strength
 At her first menace, but they bade
 her strike.
 And stood and laughed her subtlest
 skill to scorn.
 Oh, 'tis not so with me! the first woe
 fell,
 And the rest fall upon it, not on me:
 Else should I bear that Henry comes
 not?—fails
 Just this first night out of so many
 nights?
 Loving is done with! Were he sit-
 ting now,
 As so few hours since, on that seat,
 we'd love
 No more—contrive no thousand happy
 ways
 To hide love from the loveless, any
 more!
 I think I might have urged some
 little point
 In my defence, to Thorold; he was
 breathless
 For the least hint of a defence; but
 no!
 The first shame over, all that would
 might fail.
 No Henry! Yet I merely sit and
 think
 The morn's deed o'er and o'er. I
 must have crept
 Out of myself. A Mildred that has
 lost
 Her lover—oh, I dare not look
 upon
 Such woe! I crouch away from it!
 'Tis she,
 Mildred, will break her heart, not I!
 The world
 Forsakes me—only Henry's left me—
 left?
 When I have lost him, for he does
 not come,
 And I sit stupidly. . . . Oh Heaven,
 break up
 This worse than anguish, this mad
 apathy,
 By any means or any messenger!

Tresh. [*With out.*] Mildred!

Mil. Come in! Heaven hears me!

[*TRESHAM enters.*] You? alone?
Oh, no more cursing!

Tresh. Mildred, I must sit.
There—you sit!

Mil. Say it, Thorold—do not look
The curse—deliver all you come to
say!

What must become of me? Oh speak
that thought

Which makes your brow and cheek
so pale!

Tresh. My thought?

Mil. All of it!

Tresh. How we waded—
years ago—

After those water-lilies, till the plash,
I know not how, surprised us; and
you dared

Neither advance nor turn back, so
we stood

Laughing and crying until Gerard
came

Once safe upon the turf, the loudest,
too,

For once more reaching the relin-
quished prize!

How idle thoughts are—some men's
—dying men's!

Mildred,—

Mil. You call me kindlier by my
name

Than even yesterday—what is in
that?

Tresh. It weighs so much upon
my mind that I

This morning took an office not my
own!

I might . . . of course, I must be
glad or grieved,

Content or not, at every little thing
That touches you—I may with a
wrung heart

Even reprove you, Mildred; I did
more—

Will you forgive me?

Mil. Thorold? do you mock? . . .
Or no . . . and yet you bid me . . .
say that word!

Tresh. Forgive me, Mildred!—are
you silent, sweet?

Mil. [*Starting up.*] Why does not
Henry Mertoun come to-night?
Are you, too, silent?

[*Dashing his mantle aside, and
pointing to his scabbard, which
is empty.*

Ah, this speaks for you!
You've murdered Henry Mertoun!
now proceed!

What is it I must pardon? This and
all?

Well, I do pardon you—I think I do.
Thorold, how very wretched you
must be!

Tresh. He bade me tell you. . . .
Mil. What I do forbid

Your utterance of! so much that you
may tell

And will not—how you murdered
him . . . but, no!

You'll tell me that he loved me, never
more

Than bleeding out his life there—
must I say

"Indeed" to that? Enough! I par-
don you!

Tresh. You cannot, Mildred! for
the harsh words, yes:

Of this last deed Another's Judge—
whose doom

I wait in doubt, despondency, and
fear.

Mil. Oh true! there's nought for
me to pardon! True!

You loosed my soul of all its cares at
once—

Death makes me sure of him for ever!
You

Tell me his last words? *He* shall
tell me them,

And take my answer not in words,
but reading

Himself the heart I had to read him
late,

Which death . . .

Tresh. Death? you are dying
too? Well said

Of Guendolen! I dared not hope
you'd die

But she was sure of it.
Mil. Tell Guendolen
I loved her, and tell Austin . . .

Tresh. . . . Him you loved —
And me?

Mil. Ah, Thorold! was't not
rashly done
To quench that blood, on fire with
youth and hope
And love of me, whom you loved too,
and yet
Suffered to sit here waiting his ap-
proach

While you were slaying him? Oh,
doubtlessly
You let him speak his poor confused
boy's-speech

—Do his poor utmost to disarm your
wrath

And respite me!—you let him try to
give

The story of our loves, and ignorance,
And the brief madness, and the long
despair—

You let him plead all this, because
your code

Of honour bids you hear before you
strike:

But at the end, as he looked up for
life

Into your eyes—you struck him down!
Tresh. No! no!

Had I but heard him—had I let him
speak

Half the truth—less—had I looked
long on him,

I had desisted! Why, as he lay
there,

The moon on his flushed cheek, I
gathered all

The story ere he told it! I saw thro'
The troubled surface of his crime and
yours

A depth of purity immovable!

Had I but glanced, where all seemed
turbidest,

Had gleamed some inlet to the calm
beneath!

I would not glance—my punishment's
at hand.

There, Mildred, is the truth! and
you—say on

You curse me?

Mil. As I dare approach that
Heaven

Which has not bade a living thing
despair,

Which needs no code to keep its grace
from stain,

But bids the vilest worm that turns
on it

Desist and be forgiven,—I—forgive
not,

But bless you, Thorold, from my
soul of souls!

[*Falls on his neck.*
There! do not think too much upon
the past!

The cloud that's broke was all the
same a cloud

While it stood up between my friend
and you!

You hurt him 'neath its shadow— but
is that

So past retrieve? I have his heart,
you know—

I may dispose of it—I give it you!
It loves you as mine loves! Confirm

me, Henry! [*Dies.*
Tresh. I wish thee joy, beloved!

I am glad
In thy full gladness!

Guen. [*Without.*] Mildred! Tres-
ham!

[*Entering with AUSTIN.*] Thorold,
I could desist no longer. Ah, she

swoons!
That's well—

Tresh. Oh! better far than that!
Guen. She's dead!

Let me unlock her arms!
Tresh. She threw them thus

About my neck, and blessed me, and
then died.

—You'll let them stay now, Guen-
dolen!

Aus. Leave her
And look to him! What ails you,

Thorold?
Guen. White

As she—and whiter! Austin—quick
—this side!

Aus. A froth is oozing thro' his
clenched teeth—

Both lips, where they're not bitten
thro', are black!

Speak, dearest Thorold!

Tresh. Something does weigh down
My neck beside her weight : thanks :

I should fall

But for you, Austin, I believe !—there,
there .

I will pass away soon !—ah,—I had
forgotten—

I am dying.

Guen. Thorold — Thorold — why
was this ?

Tresh. I said, just as I drank the
poison off,

The earth would be no longer earth
to me,

The life out of all life was gone from
me !

There are blind ways provided, the
foredone

Heart-weary player in this pageant-
world

Drops out by, letting the main masque
defile

By the conspicuous portal :—I am
through—

Just through :—

Guen. Don't leave him, Austin !
death is close.

Tresh. Already Mildred's face is
peacefuller !

I see you, Austin—feel you—here's
my hand,

Put yours in it—You, Guendolen,
yours too !

You're Lord and Lady now—You're
Treshams—Name

And fame are yours—You hold our
'Scutcheon up.

Austin, no Blot on it ! You see how
blood

Must wash one blot away : the first
blot came

And the first blood came. To the
vain world's eye

All's gules again—no care to the vain
world.

From whence the red was drawn !

Aus. No blot shall come !

Tresh. I said that—yet it did come.

Should it come.

Vengeance is God's not man's. Re-
member me ! *[Dies.]*

Guen. *[Letting fall the pulseless
arm]* Ah, Thorold, we can but
—remember you !

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

A PLAY

- "Ivy and violet, what do ye here,
"With blossom and shoot in the warm spring-weather:
"Hiding the arms of Monchenci and Vere?"

—HANMER.

DEDICATION

NO ONE LOVES AND HONOURS BARRY CORNWALL MORE
THAN ROBERT BROWNING DOES ;

WHO, HAVING NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS PLAY
TO GIVE HIM IN PROOF OF IT,

MUST SAY SO.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

PERSONS

COLOMBE OF RAVESTEIN, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves.
 SABYNE { Her Attendants.
 ADOLF {
 GUIBERT { Courtiers.
 GAUCELME {
 MAUFROY {
 CLUGNET {
 VALENCE, Advocate of Cleves.
 PRINCE BERTHOLD, Claimant of the Duchy.
 MELCHIOR, his Confidant.

PLACE, *The Palace at Juliers.*

TIME, 16—.

ACT I

Morning. SCENE.—A corridor leading to the Audience Chamber.

GAUCELME, CLUGNET, MAUFROY,
and other Courtiers, round
 GUIBERT, *who is silently reading a paper; as he drops it at the end—*

Gui. That this should be her
 birthday; and the day
 We all invested her, twelve months
 ago,
 As the late Duke's true heiress and
 our liege;
 And that this also must become the
 day . . .
 Oh, miserable lady!

1st Court. Ay, indeed?

2nd Court. Well, Guibert?

3rd Court. But your news, my
 friend, your news!

The sooner, friend, one learns Prince
 Berthold's pleasure,

The better for us all: how writes the
 Prince?

Give me—I'll read it for the common
 good—

Gui. In time, sir—but, till time
 comes, pardon me!

Our old Duke just disclosed his child's
 retreat,

Declared her true succession to his
 rule,

And died: this birthday was the day,
 last year,

We convoyed her from Castle Rave-
 stein—

That sleeps out trustfully its extreme
 age

On the Meuse' quiet bank, where
 she lived queen

Over the water-buds,—to Juliers'
 Court

With joy and bustle: here again we
 stand;

Sir Gaucelme's buckle's constant to
 his cap—

To-day's much such another sunny day!

Gau. Come, Guibert—this outgrows a jest, I think!
You're hardly such a novice as to need
The lesson you pretend.

Gui. What lesson, sir?
That everybody, if he'd thrive at court,
Should, first and last of all, look to
himself?

Why, no: and therefore, with your
good example,
(—Ho, Master Adolf!)—to myself I'll
look.

Enter ADOLF.

Gui. The Prince's letter; why, of
all men else,
Comes it to me?

Adolf. By virtue of your place,
Sir Guibert! 'Twas the Prince's
express charge,
His envoy told us, that the missive
there

Should only reach our lady by the hand
Of whosoever held your place.

Gui. Enough!
[ADOLF retires.
Then, gentles, who'll accept a certain
poor

Indifferently honourable place,
My friends, I make no doubt, have
gnashed their teeth
At leisure minutes these half-dozen
years,

To find me never in the mood to quit?
—Who asks may have it, with my
blessing, and

This to present our lady. Who'll
accept?

You,—you,—you? There it lies, and
may, for me!

Mau. [A youth, picking up the
paper, reads aloud.]

"Prince Berthold, proved by titles
following

"Undoubted Lord of Juliers, comes
this day

"To claim his own, with licence from
the Pope,

"The Emperor, the Kings of Spain
and France"

Gau. Sufficient "titles following,"
I judge!

Don't read another! Well,—"to
claim his own?"

Mau. "And take possession of the
Duchy held

"Since twelve months, to the true
heir's prejudice,

"By" . . . Colombe, Juliers' Mistress,
so she thinks,

And Ravestein's mere lady, as we
find!

Who wants the place and paper?
Guibert's right!

I hope to climb a little in the world,—
I'd push my fortunes,—but, no more
than he,

Could tell her on this happy day of
days,

That, save the nosegay in her hand,
perhaps,

There's nothing left to call her own!
Sir Clugnet,

You fanish for promotion; what say
you?

Clug. [An old man.] To give this
letter were a sort, I take it,

Of service: services ask recompence:
What kind of corner may be Ravens-
tein?

Gui. The castle?—Oh, you'd share
her fortunes? Good!

Three walls stand upright, full as good
as four,

With no such bad remainder of a roof.
Clug. Oh,—but the Town?

Gui. Five houses, fifteen huts;
A church whereto was once a spire,

'tis judged;
And half a dyke, except in time of
thaw.

Clug. Still, there's some revenue?
Gui. Else Heaven forefend!

You hang a beacon out, should fogs
increase:

So when the Autumn floats of pine-
wood steer

Safe 'mid the white confusion, thanks
to you.

Their grateful raftman flings a
guilder in;

—That's if he means to pass your
way next time.

Clug. If not?

Gui. Hang guilders, then—he
blesses you !
Clug. What man do you suppose
me? Keep your paper !
And let me say it shows no handsome
spirit
To dally with misfortune : keep your
place !
Gau. Some one must tell her.
Gui. Some one may : you may !
Gau. Sir Guibert, 'tis no trifle
turns me sick
(Of court-hypocrisy at years like mine,
But this goes near it. Where's there
news at all ?
Who'll have the face, for instance, to
affirm
He never heard, e'en while we
crowned the girl,
That Juliers' tenure was by Salic law ;
That one, confessed her father's
cousin's child,
And, she away, undisputable heir,
Against our choice protesting and
the Duke's,
Claimed Juliers?—nor, as he pre-
ferred his claim,
That first this, then another potentate,
Inclined to its allowance?—I, or
you,
Or any one except the lady's self?
Oh, it had been the direst cruelty
To break the business to her ! Things
might change—
At all events, we'd see next masque
at end,
Next mummary over first : and so the
edge
Was taken off sharp tidings as they
came,
Till here's the Prince upon us, and
there's she
--Wreathing her hair, a song between
her lips,
With just the faintest notion possible
That some such claimant earns a liveli-
hood
About the world, by feigning griev-
ances
Few pay the story of, but grudge its
price,
And fewer listen to, a second time.

Your method proves a failure ; now
try mine—
And, since this must be carried . . .
Gui. [*Snatching the paper from
him.*] By your leave
Your zeal transports you ! 'Twill not
serve the Prince
So much as you expect, this course
you'd take ;
If she leaves quietly her palace,—
well :
But if she died upon its threshold,—
no :
He'd have the trouble of removing
her !
Come, gentles, we're all—what the
devil knows !
You, Gancelme, won't lose character,
beside—
You broke your father's heart supe-
riorly
To gather his succession—never flush !
You're from my province, and, be com-
forted,
They tell of it with wonder to this
day—
You can afford to let your talent sleep !
We'll take the very worst supposed,
as true—
There, the old Duke knew, when he
hid his child
Among the river-flowers at Ravestein,
With whom the right lay ! Call the
Prince our Duke !
There, she's no Duchess, she's no
anything
More than a young maid with the
bluest eyes—
And now, sirs, we'll not break this
young maid's heart
Coolly as Gancelme could and would !
No haste !
His talent's full-blown, ours but in
the bud—
We'll not advance to his perfection
yet—
Will we, Sir Maufroy? See, I've
ruined Maufroy
For ever as a courtier !
Gau. Here's a coil—
And, count us, will you? Count its
residue,

This boasted convoy, this day last
year's crowd !

A birthday, too—a gratulation-day !
I'm dumb : bid *that* keep silence !

Mau. and others.

Eh, Sir

Guibert ?

He's right : that does say something :
that's bare truth.

Ten—twelve, I make : a perilous
dropping-off !

Gui. Pooh—is it audience-hour ?

The vestibule

Swears too, I wager, with the
common sort

That want our privilege of entry here.

Gau. Adolf ! [*Re-enter ADOLF.*]

Who's outside ?

Gui. Oh, your looks suffice !

Nobody waiting ?

Mau. [*Looking through the door-
folds.*] Scarce our number !

Gui.

'Sdeath !

Nothing to beg for, to complain
about ?

It can't be ! Ill news spreads, but
not so fast

As thus to frighten all the world !

Gau.

The world

Lives out of doors, sir—not with you
and me

By presence-chamber porches, state-
room stairs,

Wherever warmth's perpetual : out-
side's free

To every wind from every compass-
point,

And who may get nipped needs be
weather-wise.

The Prince comes and the lady's
People go ;

The snow-goose settles down, the
swallows flee -

Why should they wait for winter-
time ? 'Tis instinct ;

Don't you feel somewhat chilly ?

Gui.

That's their craft ?

And last year's crowders-round and
criers-forth

That strewed the garlands, over-
arched the roads,

Lit up the bonfires, sang the loyal
songs !

Well, 'tis my comfort, you could
never call me

The People's Friend ! The People
keep their word

I keep my place : don't doubt I'll
entertain

The People when the Prince comes,
and the People

Are talked of !—Then, their speeches
—no one tongue

Found respite, not a pen had holiday
For they wrote, too, as well as

spoke, these knaves !

Now see : we tax and tithe them, pill
and poll,

They wince and fret enough, but pay
they must

We manage that,—so pay with a
good grace

They might as well, it costs so little
more.

But when we've done with taxes,
meet folk next

Outside the toll-booth and the rating-
place,

In public—there they have us if they
will,

We're at their mercy after that, you
see -

For one tax not ten devils could ex-
tort ;

Over and above necessity, a grace ;
This prompt disbosoming of love, to

wit—

Their vine-leaf-wrappage of our
tribute-penny,

And crowning attestation, all works
well—

Yet this precisely do they thrust on
us !

These cappings quick, and crook-and-
cringings low.

Hand to the heart, and forehead to
the knee,

With grin that shuts the eyes and
opes the mouth--

So tender they their love ; and tender
made.

Go home to curse you, the first doit
you ask ;

As if their souls were any longer
theirs !

As if they had not given ample warrant
To who should clap a collar on their
neck,

Rings in their nose, a goad to either
flank,

And take them for the brute they
boast themselves!

--Stay--there's a bustle at the outer
door--

And somebody entreating. . . that's
my name!

Adolf.--I heard my name!

Adolf. 'Twas probably
The Suitor.

Gui. Oh, there is one?

Adolf. With a suit
He'd fain enforce in person.

Gui. The good heart
--And the great fool! Just ope the
mid-door's fold--

Is that a lappet of his cloak, I see?

Adolf. If it bear plenteous signs of
travel . . . ay,

The very cloak my comrades tore!

Gui. Why tore?

Adolf. He seeks the Duchess' pre-
sence in that trim:

Since daybreak, was he posted here-
abouts

Lest he should miss the moment.

Gui. Where's he now?

Adolf. Gone for a minute possibly,
not more.

They have ado enough to thrust him
back.

Gui. Ay--but my name. I caught?

Adolf. Oh, sir--he said

--What was it?--You had known him
formerly,

And, he believed, would help him did
you guess

He waited now--you promised him
as much--

The old plea!--'Faith, he's back,--
renews the charge!

[Speaking at the door.] So long as the
man parleys, peace outside!

Nor be too ready with your halberts,
there!

Gui. My horse bespattered, as he
blocked the path,

A thin sour man not unlike somebody.

Adolf. He holds a paper in his
breast, whereon

He glances when his cheeks flush and
his brow

At each repulse

Gui. I noticed he'd a brow.

Adolf. So glancing, he grows
calmer, leans awhile

Over the balustrade, adjusts his dress.

And presently turns round, quiet
again,

With some new pretext for admit-
tance.--Back!

(To GUIBERT.)--Sir, he has seen you!

Now cross halberts! Ha--
Pascal is prostrate--there lies Fabian
too--

No passage! Whither would the
madman press?

Close the doors quick on me!

Gui. Too late--he's here.

Enter, hastily and with discomposed
dress, VALENCE.

Val. Sir Guibert, will you help me?

--Me, that come

Charged by your townsmen, all who
starve at Cleves,

To represent their heights and depths
of woe

Before our Duchess and obtain relief!

Such errands barricade such doors, it
seems:

But not a common hindrance drive-
me back

On all the sad yet hopeful faces, lit

With hope for the first time, which
sent me forth!

Cleves, speak for me! Cleves' men
and women, speak--

Who followed me--your youngest--
many a mile

That I might go the fresher from their
ranks,

--Who sit--your weakest--by the
city-gates,

To take me fuller of what news I bring

As I return--for I must needs return!

--Can I? 'Twere hard, no listener
for their wrongs,

To turn them back upon the old
despair--

Harder, Sir Gumbert, than imploring
thus—

So I do—any way you please—im-
plore!

If you . . . but how should you re-
member Cleves?

Yet they of Cleves remember you so
well!

Ay, comment on each trait of you
they keep,

Your words and deeds caught up at
second hand,—

Proud, I believe, at bottom of their
hearts,

Of the very levity and recklessness
Which only prove that you forget
their wrongs.

Cleves, the grand town, whose men
and women starve,

Is Cleves forgotten?—Then remember
me!

You promised me that you would help
me once

For other purpose: will you keep
your word?

Gai. And who may you be, friend?

Val. Valence of Cleves,

Gai. Valence of . . . not the Ad-
vocate of Cleves

I owed my whole estate to, three
years back?

Ay, well may you keep silence! Why,
my lords,

You've heard, I'm sure, how, Pente-
cost three years,

I was so nearly ousted of my land
By some knaves' pretext—(eh? when
you refused me

Your ugly daughter, Clugnet),—and
you've heard

How I recovered it by miracle!
—(When I refused her)! Here's the

very friend,
Valence of Cleves, all parties have
to thank!

Nay, Valence, this procedure's vile in
you—

I'm no more grateful than a courtier
should,

But politic am I—I bear a brain,
Can cast about a little, might require
Your services a second time! I tried

To tempt you with advancement here
to court

—“No!”—well, for curiosity at least
To view our life here—“No!”—our

Duchess, then,

—A pretty woman's worth some pains
to see,

Nor is she spoiled, I take it, if a crown
Completes the forehead pale and
tresses pure. . . .

Val. Our city trusted me its
miseries,

And I am come.

Gai. So much for taste! But
“come,”

So may you be, for anything I know,
To beg the Pope's cross, or Sir
Clugnet's daughter,

And with an equal chance you get all
three!

If it was ever worth your while to
come,

Was not the proper way worth find-
ing too?

Val. Straight to the palace-portal,
sir, I came—

Gai. —And said? —

Val. —That I had brought
the miseries

Of a whole city to relieve.

Gai. —Which saying
Won your admittance? You saw me,
indeed.

And here, no doubt, you stand: as
certainly,

My intervention, I shall not dispute.
Procures you audience; which, if I

procure,

That paper's closely written—by
Saint Paul.

Here flock the Wrongs, follow the
Remedies,

Chapter and verse, One, Two, A, B,
and C—

Perhaps you'd enter, make a reverence,
And launch these “miseries” from
first to last?

Val. How should they let me pause
or turn aside?

Gai. [To VALENCE.] My worthy
sir, one question: you've come
straight

From Cleves, you tell us: heard you
any talk

At Cleves about our lady?

Val. Much.

Gau. And what?

Val. Her wish was to redress all
wrongs she knew.

Gau. That, you believed?

Val. You see me, sir!

Gau. - Nor stopped

Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers
here,

For any rumours you might find
afloat?

Val. I had my townsmen's wrongs
to busy me.

Gau. This is the Lady's birthday,
do you know?

-Her day of pleasure?

Val. -I know that the Great,
For Pleasure born, should still be on
the watch

To exclude Pleasure when a Duty
offers:

Even as, the Lowly too, for Duty
born,

May ever snatch a Pleasure if in reach:
Both will have plenty of their birth-
right, sir!

Gau. [*Aside to GUILBERT.*] Sir Gui-
bert, here's your man! No
scruples now—

You'll never find his like! Time
presses hard.

I've seen your drift and Adolf's too,
this while,

But you can't keep the hour of audience
back

Much longer, and at noon the Prince
arrives.

[*Pointing to VALENCE.*] Entrust him
with it—fool no chance away!

Gui. -Him?

Gau. - With the missive!

What's the name to her?

Gui. No bad thought!—Yet, 'tis
yours—who ever played

The tempting serpent—else, 'twere
no bad thought!

I should—and do—mistrust it for
your sake,

Or else . . .

*Enter an Official who communi-
cates with ADOLF.*

Adolf. The Duchess will receive the
Court!

Gui. Give us a moment, Adolf!
Valence, friend,

I'll help you: we of the service,
you're to mark.

Have special entry, while the herd
. . . the folks

Outside, get access through our help
alone

-Well, it is so, was so, and I sup-
pose

So ever will be your natural lot is,
therefore,

To wait your turn and opportunity,
And probably miss both. Now, I
engage

To set you, here and in a minute's
space,

Before the lady with full leave to
plead

Whether and verse, and A, and B,
and C,

To heart's content.

Val. I grieve that I must ask,
This being, yourself admit, the custom
here,

To what the price of such a favour
mounts?

Gui. Just so! You're not without
a courtier's tact!

Little at court, as your quick instinct
prompts,

Do such as we without a recompense.

Val. Yours is?

Gui. A trifle: here's a document
'Tis some one's duty to present her
Grace—

I say, not mine—these say, not theirs
—such points

Have weight at court. Will you
relieve us all

And take it?—Just say, "I am bidden
lay

"This paper at the Duchess' feet."

Val. No more?

I thank you, sir!

Adolf. Her Grace receives
the Court!

Gail. [*Aside.*] Now, *sursum corda*,
quoit the mass-priest! Do—

Whoever's my kind saint, do let
alone

These pushings to and fro, and pull-
ings back;

Peaceably let me hang o' the devil's
arm

The downward path, if you can't
pluck me off

Completely! Let me live quite his,
or yours!

[*The Countiers begin to range
themselves, and move towards the
door.*]

After me, Valence! So our famous
Claves

Lack bread? Yet don't we gallants
buy their lace?

And dear enough—it beggars me, I
know,

To keep my very gloves fringed
properly!

This, Valence, is our Great State
Hall you cross:

You grey urn's veritable marcasite.

The Pope's gift; and those salvers
testify

The Emperor. Presently you'll set
your foot

. . . But you don't speak, friend
Valence!

Val. I shall speak.

Gail. [*Look to GUILBERT.*] Guilbert
—it were no such ungraceful thing

If you and I, at first, seemed horror-
struck

With the bad news. Look here,
what you shall do!

Suppose you, first, clap hand to
word and cry

"Yield strangers our allegiance?
First I'll perish

"Beside your Grace!"—and so give
me the cue

To . . .

Gail. Clap your hand to note-book
and jot down

That to regale the Prince with? I
conceive!

[*To VALENCE.*] Do, Valence, speak,
or I shall half suspect

You're plotting to supplant us, me
the first,

I' the Lady's favour: is't the grand
harangue

You mean to make, that thus en-
grosses you?

—Which of her virtues you'll apos-
trophise?

Or is't the fashion you aspire to start,
Of that close-curled, not unbecoming
hair?

—Or what else ponder you?

Val. My townsmen's wrongs!

ACT II

Non. SCENE.—*The Presence-
chamber.*

The DUCHESS and SABYNE.

The D. Announce that I am ready
for the Court!

Sab. 'Tis scarcely audience-hour, I
think—your Grace

May best consult your own relief, no
doubt,

And shun the crowd; but few can
have arrived . . .

The D. Let those not yet arrived,
then, keep away!

'Twas *me*, this day, last year at
Ravestein.

You hurried. It has been full time,
beside,

This half-hour. Do you hesitate?

Sab. Forgive me!

The D. Stay, Sabyne: let me
hasten to make sure

Of one true thanker: here with you
begins

My audience, claim you first its
privilege!

It is my birth's event they celebrate
You need not wish me more such
happy days,

But—ask some favour! Have you
none to ask?

Has Adolf none, then? this was far
from least

Of much I waited for impatiently,
Assure yourself! It seemed so natural

Your gift, beside this bunch of river-
bells,
Should be the power and leave of
doing good
To you, and greater pleasure to myself:
You ask my leave to-day to marry
Adolf?
The rest is my concern.

Sab. Your Grace is ever
Our Lady of dear Ravestein,—but,
for Adolf . . .

The D. "But"? You have not,
sure, changed in your regard
And purpose towards him?

Sab. We change!

The D. Well, then? Well?

Sab. How could we two be happy,
and, most like,
Leave Juliers, when . . . when . . .
but 'tis audience-time!

The D. "When, if you left me, I
were left indeed?"

Would you subjoin that?—Bid the
Court approach!

—Why should we play thus with each
other, Sabyne?

Do I not know, if courtiers prove
remiss,

If friends detain me and get blame
for it,

There is a cause? Of last year's
fervid throng

Scarce one half comes now!

Sab. [*Alb.*] One half? No,
alas!

The D. So can the mere suspicion
of a cloud

Over my fortunes strike each loyal
heart.

They've heard of this Prince Berthold;
and, forsooth,

Each foolish arrogant pretence he
makes,

May grow more foolish and more
arrogant.

They please to apprehend! I thank
their love!

Admit them!

Sab. [*Alb.*] How much has she
really learned?

The D. Surely, whoever's absent,
Tristan waits?

—Or at least Romuald, whom my
father raised

From nothing—come, he's faithful to
me, come!

(Sabyne. I should but be the prouder
—yes.

And fitter to comport myself aright)
Not Romuald? Xavier—what said
he to that?

For Xavier hates a parasite. I know!

[SABYNE goes out.]

The D. Well, sunshine's every-
where, and summer too;

Next year 'tis the old place again,
perhaps—

The water-breeze again, the birds
again

. . . It cannot be! It is too late to
be!

What part had I, or choice in all of
it?

Hither they brought me; I had not
to think

Nor care, concern myself with doing
good

Or ill, my task was just—to live,—to
live,

And, answering ends there was no
need explain,

To render Juliers happy—so they said.
All could not have been falsehood!

Some was love.

And wonder and obedience— I did all
They looked for! Why then cease
to do it now?

Yet this is to be calmly set aside,
And—ere next birthday's dawn, for
aught I know,

Things change, a claimant may arrive,
and I . . .

It cannot nor it shall not be! His
right?

Well then, he has the right, and I
have not,

—But who bade all of you surround
my life

And close its growth up with your
Ducal crown

Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me
perishing?

I could have been like one of you,—
loved, hoped,

Feared, lived and died like one of
 you—but you
 Would take that life away and give
 me this.
 And I will keep this! I will face you
 —Come!

Enter the Courtiers and VALENCE.

The Courtiers. Many such happy
 mornings to your Grace!

The D. [*Aside, as they pay their
 devoir.*] The same words—the
 same faces, the same love!

I have been over-fearful. These are
 few—

But these, at least, stand firmly—
 these are mine!

As many come as may, and if no
 more.

'Tis that these few suffice—they do
 suffice!

What succour may not next year bring
 me! Plainly

I feared too soon! [*To the Court.*] I
 thank you, sirs: all thanks!

Val. [*Aside as the DUCHESS passes
 from one group to another, con-
 versing.*]

'Tis she—the vision this day last year
 brought.

When for a golden moment at our
 Cleves

She tarried in her progress hither.
 Cleves

Chose me to speak its welcome, and
 I spoke

—Not that she could have noted the
 recluse

—Ungainly, old before his time—who
 gazed—

. . . Well, Heaven's gifts are not
 wasted, and that gaze

Kept, and shall keep me to the end,
 her own!

She was above it—but so, would not
 sink

My gaze to earth! The People
 caught it, hers—

Thenceforward, mine; but thus en-
 tirely mine.

Who shall affirm, had she not raised
 my soul

Ere she retired and left me—them?—
 She turns—

There's all her wondrous face at once!
 The ground

Reels and . . . [*Suddenly occupying
 himself with his paper.*] These

wrongs of theirs I have to plead!
The D. [*To the Court.*] Nay, com-
 pliment enough! And kindness'

self

Should pause before it wish me more
 such years.

'Twas fortunate that thus, ere youth
 escaped,

I tasted life's pure pleasure—one such,
 pure,

Is worth a thousand, mixed—and
 youth's for pleasure:

Mine is received; let my age pay for
 it.

Gau. So, pay, and pleasure paid
 for, thinks your Grace,

Should never go together?

Gui. How, Sir Gaucelme?
 Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly

At the snatched breathing-intervals of
 work?

As good you saved it till the dull
 day's-end

When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is
 gone!

Eat first, then work upon the strength
 of it!

The D. True: you enable me to
 risk my Future.

By giving me a Past beyond recall.
 I lived, a girl, one happy leisure

year:

Let me endeavour to be the Duchess
 now!

And so.—what news, Sir Guibert,
 spoke you of?

[*As they advance a little, and
 GUIBERT speaks—*]

--That gentleman?

Val. [*Aside.*] I feel her eyes on
 me!

Gui. [*to VALENCE.*] The Duchess,
 sir, inclines to hear your suit!

Advance! He is from Cleves.
Val. [*Coming forward.*] [*Aside.*]
 Their wrongs—their wrongs!

The D. And you, sir, are from Cleves? How fresh in mind, The hour or two I passed at queenly Cleves!

She entertained me bravely, but the best

Of her good pageant seemed its standers-by,

With insuppressible joy on every face! What says my ancient, famous, happy Cleves?

Val. Take the truth, lady—you are made for truth!

So think my friends: nor do they less deserve

The having you to take it, you shall think,

When you know all—nay, when you only know

How, on that day, you recollect at Cleves.

When the poor acquiescing multitude Who thrust themselves with all their woes apart

Into unnoticed corners, that the few Their means sufficed to muster trap-pings for,

Might fill the foreground, occupy your sight

With joyous faces fit to bear away And boast of as a sample of all Cleves

—How, when to daylight these crept out once more,

Clutching, unconscious, each his empty rags

Whence the scant coin, which had not half bought bread,

That morn he shook forth, counted piece by piece,

And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent them

To burn, or flowers to strew, before your path

—How, when the golden flood of music and bliss

Ebb'd, as their moon retreated, and again

Left the sharp black-point rocks of misery bare

—Then I, their friend, had only to suggest

"Saw she the horror as she saw the pomp!"—

And as one man they cried "He speaks the truth—

"Show her the horror! Take from our own mouths

"Our wrongs and show them, she will see them too!"

—This they cried, lady! I have brought the wrongs.

The D. Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs—apparent now and thus? I thank you—in that paper?—Give it me!

Val. (There, Cleves!) In this! (What did I promise, Cleves?)

Our weavers clothiers, spinners are reduced

Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon—I forget

I buy the privilege of this approach, And promptly would discharge my debt. I lay

This paper humbly at the Duchess' feet!

[*Presenting GUILBERT'S paper.*

Gui. Stay—for the present . . .

The D. Stay, sir? I take aught That teaches me their wrongs with greater pride

Than this your Ducal circlet. Thank you, sir!

[*The DUCHESS reads hastily; then, turning to the Courtiers—*

What have I done to you? Your deed or mine

Was it, this crowning me? I gave myself

No more a title to your homage, no, Than church-flowers, born this season,

wrote the words In the saint's-book that sanctified them first.

For such a flower, you plucked me well, you erred

Well, 'twas a weed—remove the eye-sore quick!

But should you not remember it has lain

Steeped in the candles' glory, palely shrined,

Nearer God's Mother than most earthly thing?

—That if't be faded 'tis with prayer's
sole breath—

That the one day it boasted was God's
day?

Still, I do thank you—had you used
respect

Here might I dvindle to my last white
leaf,

Here lose life's latest freshness, which
even yet

May yield some wandering insect rest
and food:

So, fling me forth, and —all is best for
all!

[*After a pause.*] Prince Berthold, who
art Juliers' Duke, it seems

The King's choice, and the Emperor's,
and the Pope's —

Be mine, too! Take this people!
Tell not me

Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,
—But take them, from a heart that
yearns to give!

Find out their love, —I could not;
find their fear,

I would not; find their like, I never
shall,

Among the flowers!

[*Taking off her coronet.*
Colombe of Ravestein

Thanks God she is no longer Duchess
here!

Val. [*Advancing to GUIBERT.*] Sir
Guibert,—knight, they call you
—this of mine

Is the first step I ever set at court.
You dared make me your instrument,
I find:

For that, so sure as you and I are
men,

We reckon to the utmost presently;
But as you are a courtier and I
none,

Your knowledge may instruct me, I,
already,

Have too far outraged, by my ignor-
ance

Of courtier-ways, this lady, to pro-
ceed

A second step and risk addressing her
—I am degraded,—you, let me ad-
dress!

Out of her presence, all is plain enough
What I shall do—but in her presence,
too,

Surely there's something proper to be
done!

[*To the others.*] You, gentles, tell me
if I guess aright—

May I not strike this man to earth?

The Courtiers. [*As GUIBERT springs
forward, withholding him.*] Let
go!

—The Clothiers' spokesman, Guibert?
Grace a churl?

The D. [*To VALENCE.*] Oh, be ac-
quainted with your party, sir!

He's of the oldest lineage Juliers
beasts;

A lion crests him for a cognisance;
"Scorning to waver"—that's his
'scutcheon's word;

His office with the new Duke—pro-
bably

The same in honour as with me; or
more.

By so much as this gallant turn de-
serves:

He's now, I dare say, of a thousand
times

The rank and influence that remain
with her

Whose part you take! So, lest for
taking it

You suffer . . .

Val. I may strike him then to
earth?

Gui. [*Falling on his knee.*] Great
and dear lady, pardon me!
Hear once!

Believe me and be merciful—be just!
I could not bring myself to give that

paper

Without a keener pang than I dared
meet

—And so felt Clugnet here, and
Maufroy here

—No one dared meet it. Protesta-
tion's cheap,

But, if to die for you did any good.
[*To GAUCELME.*] Would not I die,
sir? Say your worst of me!

But it does no good, that's the mourn-
ful truth.

And since the hint of a resistance,
even,

Would just precipitate, on you the
first,

A speedier ruin—I shall not deny,
Saving myself indubitable pain,
I thought to give you pleasure (who
might say?)

By showing that your only subject
found

To carry the sad notice, was the man
Precisely ignorant of its contents;
A nameless, mere provincial advocate;
One whom 'twas like you never saw
before.

Never would see again. All has gone
wrong;

But I meant right, God knows, and
you, I trust!

The D. A nameless advocate, this
gentleman?—

(I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

Gui. [*Rising, to VALENCE.*]—Sir,
and you?—

Val.—Rejoice that you are lightened
of a load.

Now, you have only me to reckon
with!

The D. One I have never seen,
much less obliged?—

Val. Dare I speak, lady?

The D. Dare you! Heard you not
I rule no longer?

Val. Lady, if your rule
Were based alone on such a ground
as these

[*Pointing to the Courtiers.*
Could furnish you,—abjure it! They
have hidden

A source of true dominion from your
sight.

The D. You hear them—no such
source is left . . .

Val. Hear Cleves!
Whose haggard craftsmen rose to
starve this day,

Starve now, and will lie down at
night to starve,

Sure of a like to-morrow—but as sure
Of a most unlike to-morrow-after-that,

Since end things must, end howsoe'er
things may.

What curbs the brute-force instinct in
its hour?

What makes, instead of rising, all as
one,

And teaching fingers, so expert to
wield

Their tool, the broadsword's play or
carbine's trick.

—What makes that there's an easier
help, they think,

For you, whose name so few of them
can spell,

Whose face scarce one in every hun-
dred saw,

You simply have to understand their
wrongs,

And wrongs will vanish—so, still
trades are plied,

And swords lie rusting, and myself
stand here?

There is a vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom; tender-
ness

To wrong and pain, and knowledge
of its cure—

And these, embodied in a woman's form
That best transmits them, pure as first
received,

From God above her, to mankind
below.

Will you derive your rule from such
a ground,

Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say,
Of this man—this—and this?

The D. [*After a pause.*] You come
from Cleves—

How many are at Cleves of such a
mind?

Val. [*From his paper.*] “We, all
the manufacturers of Cleves.”—

The D. Or stay, sir—lest I seem
too covetous

Are you my subject? such as you
describe

Am I to you—though to no other
man?

Val. [*From his paper.*]—“Valence,
ordained your Advocate at
Cleves”—

The D. [*Replacing the coronet.*]—
Then I remain Cleves' Duchess!

Take your note,

While Cleves but yields one subject
of this stamp,

I stand her lady till she waves me
off!

For her sake, all the Prince claims I
withhold;

Laugh at each menace; and, his power
defying,

Return his missive with its due con-
tempt! [*Cast it away.*]

Gai. [*Picking it up.*] Whither to the
Prince I will deliver, Lady,

[*Note it down, Gauceime*!—with your
message too!

The D. I think the office is a sub-
ject's, sir!

—Either . . . how style you him?
my special guarder

The Marshal's—for who knows but
violence

May follow the delivery!—Or, per-
haps,

My Chancellor's—for law may be to
urge

On its receipt!—Or, even my Cham-
berlain's—

For I may violate established form!
[*To VALENCE.*]

Sir,—for the half
hour till this service ends,

Will you become all these to me?
Val. [*Falling on his knee.*]

My
Liege!

The D. Give me!
[*The Courtiers present their*

edges of office.
[*Putting them by.*]

—Whatever was
their virtue once,
They need new consecration! [*Raising*

VALENCE.] Are you mine?
—I will be Duchess yet!

[*She retires.*
The Courtiers. Our Duchess yet!

A glorious lady! Worthy love and
dread!

I'll stand by her,—and I, whate'er
beside!

Gai. [*To VALENCE.*] Well done,
well done, sir! I care not who

knows,
You have done nobly, and I envy
you—

Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think:

For when one gets a place like this I
hold,

One gets too the remark that its mere
wages,

The pay and the preferment, make
our prize

Talk about zeal and faith apart from
these,

We're laughed at—much would zeal
and faith subsist

Without these also! Yet, let these
be stopped,

Our wages discontinue,—then, indeed,
Our zeal and faith, we hear on every

side,
Are not released—having been pledged
away

I wonder with what zeal and faith in
turn?

Hard money purchased me my place!
No, no!

I'm right, sir—but your wrong is
better still,

If I had time and skill to argue it.
Therefore, I say, I'll serve you, how

you please—
If you like,—fight you, as you seem
to wish—

(The kind of me that, in sober
truth,

I never dreamed I did you any
harm)

Gau. —Or, kinder still, you'll in-
troduce, no doubt,

His merits to the Prince who's just
at hand,

And let no hint drop he's made
Chancellor,

And Chamberlain, and Heaven knows
what beside!

Clug. [*To VALENCE.*] You stare,
young sir, and threaten! Let

me say,
That at your age, when first I came
to court,

I was not much above a gentleman;
While now . . .

Val. —You are Head-Lackey?
With your office

I have not yet been graced, sir!
Other Courtiers to Clug.

Let
him talk!

Fidelity—disinterestedness—
Excuse so much! Men claimed my
worship ever
Who, staunch and steadfastly . . .

Enter ADOLF.

Adolf. The Prince arrives!
Courtiers. Ha? How?
Adolf. He leaves his guard a
stage behind

At Aix, and enters almost by himself.

1st Court. The Prince! This
foolish business puts all out!

2nd Court. Let Gaucelme speak
first!

3rd Court. Better I began
About the state of Juliers—should
one say

All's prosperous and inviting him!

4th Court. —Or rather
All's prostrate and imploring him!

5th Court. That's best!
Where's the Cleves' paper, by the
way?

4th Court. [*To VALENCE.*] Sir
sir—

If you'll but give that paper—trust
it me.

I'll warrant . . .

5th Court. Softly, sir—the Mar-
shal's duty!

Clug. Has not the Chamberlain a
hearing first

By virtue of his patent?

Gau. Patents?—Duties?
All that, my masters, must begin
again!

One word composes the whole con-
troversy

We're simply now—the Prince's!

The Others. Ay the Prince's!

Enter SABYNE.

Sab. Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time
for ceremony!

Where's whom our lady calls her only
subject?

She needs him! Who is here the
Duchess's?

Val. [*Starting from his reverie.*]
Most gratefully I follow to her
feet!

ACT III

Afternoon. SCENE.—The Vestibule.

*Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD and
MELCHIOR.*

Berth. A thriving little burgh this
Juliers looks.

[*Half-apart.*] Keep Juliers, and as
good you kept Cologne:

Better try Aix, though!

Mel. Please 't your Highness speak?

Berth. [*As before.*] Aix, Cologne,
Frankfort,—Milan;—Rome!

Mel. —The Grave

—More weary seems your Highness,
I remark,

Than sundry conquerors whose path
I've watched

Through fire and blood to any prize
they gain.

I could well wish you, for your proper
sake,

Had met some shade of opposition
here

—Found a blunt seneschal refuse un-
lock,

Or a sacred usher lead your steps
astray.

You must not look for next achieve-
ment's palm

So easy: this will hurt your conquer-
ing!

Berth. My next? Ay as you say,
my next and next!

Well, I am tired, that's truth, and
moody too,

This quiet entrance-morning; listen
why!

Our little burgh, now, Juliers—'tis
indeed

One link, however insignificant,
Of the great chain by which I reach
my hope—

—A link I must secure; but other-
wise,

You'd wonder I esteem'd it worth
my grasp.

Just see what life is, with its shifts
and turns!

It happens now—this very nook—
to be

A place that once . . . but a short
while since, neither --

When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on
Of foreign courts, and bore my claims
about.

Discarded by one kinsman, and the
other

A poor priest merely,—then, I say,
this place

Shone my ambition's object; to be
Duke --

Seemed then what to be Emperor
seems now.

My rights were far from being just; I
as plain

In those days as of late I promise
you --

And 'twas my day-dream, Lady
Colombe here

Might e'en compound the matter, pity
me,

Be struck, say, with my chivalry and
grace

(I was a boy!)—be my her hand at
length,

And make me Duke, in her right if
not mine.

Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers
now!

Hearken: if ever I be Emperor,
Remind me what I felt and said to-
day!

Mel. All this consoles a bookish
man like me!

—And so will weariness cling to you!
Wrong --

Wrong! Had you sought the Lady's
court yourself, --

Faced the redoubtables composing it,
Flattered this, threatened that man,

bribed the other, --

Pleaded, by writ and word and deed,
your cause, --

Conquered a footing inch by painful
inch, --

And, after long years' struggle
pounced at last

On her for prize, — the right life had
been lived.

And justice done to divers faculties
Shut in that brow: yourself were
visible

As you stood victor, then! whom
now — (your pardon!)

I am forced narrowly to search and
see

So are you hid by helps — this Pope,
your uncle —

Your cousin, the other King! You
are a Mind, --

They, Body: too much of mere legs-
and-arms

Obstructs the mind so! Match these
with their like --

Match mind with mind!
Berth. And when's your mind

to match?

They show me legs-and-arms to cope
withal!

I'd subjugate this city—where's its
mind?

[*The Courtiers enter slowly.*
Mel. Got out of sight when you
came troops and all!

And in its stead, here greets you flesh-
and-blood --

A smug oeconomy of both, this first!
[*Is Crugnot bows obsequiously.*

Well done, gout, all considered! — I
may go?

Berth. Help me receive them!
Mel. Oh, they just will say

What yesterday at Aix their fellows
said, --

At Treves, the day before! — Sir
Prince, my friend,

Why do you let your life slip thus? —
Meant me,

I have my little Juliers to achieve —
The understanding this tough Pla-
tonist,

Your holy uncle disinters, Amelius —
Lend me a company of horse and foot,

To help me through his tractate — gain
my Duchy!

Berth. And Empire, after that is
gained, will be --?

Mel. To help me through your
uncle's comment, Prince!

[*Goes.*
Berth. Ah? Well! he o'er-refines
-- the scholar's fault!

How do I let my life slip? Say, this
life,

I lead now, differs from the common
life
Of other men in mere degree, not
kind,
Of joys and griefs,—still there is such
degree—
Mere largeness in a life is something,
sure,—

Enough to care about and struggle
for,

In this world: for this world, the
Size of things;

The Sort of things, for that to come,
no doubt!

A great is better than a little aim—
And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy
mouth

And failed so, under that grey
convent-wall,

Was I more happy than I should be
now

[*By this time, the Courtiers are
ranged before him.*]

If failing of my Empire? Not a
whit!

—Here comes the Mind, it once had
tasked me sore

To baffle, but for my advantages!
All's best as 'tis—these scholars talk
and talk!

[*Sits himself.*]

Ch. Courtiers. Welcome our Prince
to Juliers!—to his Heritage!

Our dutifullest service proffer we!

Clug. I, please your Highness,
having exercised

The function of Grand Chamberlain
at Court,

With much acceptance, as men
testify . . .

Berth. I cannot greatly thank you,
gentlemen!

The Pope declares my claim to the
Duchy founded

On strictest justice; if you concede it,
therefore,

I do not wonder—and the kings my
friends

Protesting they will see such claim
enforced,

You easily may offer to assist us.

But there's a slight discretionary
power

To serve me in the matter, you've
had long,

Though late you use it. This is well
to say—

But could you not have said it months
ago?

I'm not denied my own Duke's
truncheon, true

'Tis flung me—I stoop down, and
from the ground

Pick it, with all you placid standers-
by—

And now I have it, gems and mire at
once,

Grace go with it to my soiled hands,
you say!

Gui. (By Paul, the Advocate our
doughty friend

Cuts the best figure!)

Gau. If our ignorance

May have offended, sure our loyalty . . .

Berth. Loyalty? Yours?—Oh—
of yourselves you speak!

—I mean the Duchess all this time, I
hope!

And since I have been forced repeat
my claims

As if they never had been made
before,

As I began, so must I end, it seems.
The formal answer to the grave
demand—

What says the lady?
Courtiers. [*One to another.*] 1st

Court. Marshal! 2nd *Court.*
Orator!

Gui. A variation of our mistress'
way!

Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet?—
that, he waits!

1st *Court.* Your place!
2nd *Court.* Just now it was your
own!

Gui. The devil's!

Berth. [*To GUIBERT.*] Come for-
ward, friend—you with the paper,
there!

Is Juliers the first city I've obtained?
By this time, I may boast proficiency

In each decorum of the circumstance!
Give it me as she gave it—the peti-
tion

(Demand, you style it)—what's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's Allowance?—I heard all at Treves, last week!

Gui. [To GUIBERT.] "Give it him as she gave it!"

Gui. And why not?

[To BERTHOLD.] The lady crushed your summons thus together, And bade me, with the very greatest scorn

So fair a frame could hold, inform you . . .

Courtiers. Stop—Idiot!—

Gui. --Inform you she denied your claim, Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel, The blustering Advocate!)

Berth. By heaven and earth! Dare you jest, sir?

Gui. Did they at Treves, last week?

Berth. [Starting up.] Why then, I look much bolder than I knew, And you prove better actors than I thought—

Since, as I live, I took you as you entered

For just so many dearest friends of mine,

Fled from the sinking to the rising power

—The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!

Whereas, I am alone here for the moment—

With every soldier left behind at Aix!

Silence? That means the worst—I

thought as much!

What follows next then?

Courtiers. Gracious Prince—he raves!

Gui. He asked the truth and why not get the truth?

Berth. Am I a prisoner? Speak, will somebody?

—But why stand paltering with imbeciles?

Let me see her, or . . .

Gui. Her, without her leave,

Shall no one see—she's Duchess yet
Courtiers. [Footsteps without, a they are disputing.]

Good chance
She's here—the Lady Colombe's sell
Berth. 'Tis well

[Aside.] Array a handful thus against my world?

Not ill done, truly! Were not this a mind

To match one's mind with? Colombe! —Let us wait!

I failed so, under that grey convent-wall!

She comes!

Gui. The Duchess! Strangers, range yourselves!

[As the DUCHESS enters in conversation with VALENCE, BERTHOLD and the Courtiers join back a little.]

The D. Presagetically it beats, presagely,

My heart—the right is Berthold's and not mine!

Val. Grant that he has the right, dare I mistrust

Your power to acquiesce so patiently As you believe, in such a dream-like change

Of fortune—change abrupt, profound, complete?

The D. Ah, the first bitterness is over now!

Bitter I may have felt it to confront The truth, and ascertain those natures' value

I had so counted on—that was a pang—

But I did bear it, and the worst is over:

Let the Prince take them!

Val. —And take Juliers too? —Your People without crosses, wands, and chains—

Only with hearts?

The D. There I feel guilty, sir! I cannot give up what I never had:

For these I ruled, not them—these stood between.

Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by stealth

Of Berthold from the first : more news
and more :

Closer and closer swam the thunder-
cloud.

But I was safely housed with these,
I knew !

At times, when to the casement I
would turn,

At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's
play,

I caught the storm's red glimpses on
its edge

Yet I was sure some one of all these
friends

Would interpose -- I followed the
bird's flight,

Or plucked the flower--some one
would interpose !

Val. Not one thought on the
People--and Cleves there !

The D. So, sadly conscious my
real sway was missed,

Its shadow goes without so much
regret :

Else could I not again thus calmly
bid you,

Answer Prince Berthold !

Val. Then you acquiesce ?

The D. Remember over whom it
was I ruled !

Gul. [Stepping forward.] Prince
Berthold, yonder, craves an
audience, Lady !

The D. [To VALENCE.] I only have
to turn, and I shall face

Prince Berthold ! Oh, my very heart
is sick !

It is the daughter of a line of Dukes,
This scornful insolent adventurer
Will bid depart from my dead father's
halls !

I shall not answer him dispute with
him -

But, as he bids, depart ! Prevent it, sir !
Sir--but a mere day's respite ! Urge
for me

--What I shall call to mind I should
have urged

When time's gone by 'twill all be
mine, you urge !

A day--an hour--that I myself may
lay

My rule down ! 'Tis too sudden
must not be !

The world's to hear of it ! Once done
for ever !

How will it read, sir ? How be sung
about ?

Prevent it !

Berth. [Approaching.] Your frank
indignation, Lady,

Cannot escape me ! Overbold I
seem

But somewhat should be pardoned
my surprise,

At this reception,--this defiance,
rather.

And if, for their and your sakes, I
rejoice

Your virtues could inspire a trusty few
To make such gallant stand in your
behalf.

I cannot but be sorry, for my own,
Your friends should force me to re-
trace my steps,

Since I no longer am permitted speak
After the pleasant peaceful course
prescribed

No less by courtesy than relationship
Which, if you once forgot, I still re-
member :

But never must attack pass unrepelled.
Suffer, that through you, I demand
of these.

Who controverts my claim to Julius's ?
The D. -- Me,

You say, you do not speak to -
Berth. Of your subjects

I ask, then : whom do you accredit ?
Where

Stand those should answer ?

Val. [Advancing.] The Lady is
alone !

Berth. Alone, and thus ? So weak
and yet so bold ?

Val. I said she was alone--
Berth. --And weak, I said.

Val. When is man strong until he
feels alone ?

It was some lonely strength at first,
be sure,

Created organs, such as those you seek,
By which to give its varied purpose
shape--

And, naming the selected ministrants,
Took sword, and shield, and sceptre,
each, a man!

That strength performed its work and
passed its way:

You see our Lady: there, the old
shapes stand!

-A Marshal, Chamberlain, and
Chancellor

"Be helped their way, into their
death put life

"And find advantage!"—so you
counsel us:

But let strength feel alone, seek help
itself

And, as the inland-hatched sea-
creature hunts

The sea's breast out, --as, littered 'mid
the waves,

The desert-brute makes for the desert's
joy,

So turns our lady to her true resource,
Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out
types,

--So, I am first her instinct fastens on!
And prompt I say, so clear as heart
can speak,

The People will not have you; nor
shall have!

It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves
And fight you to the last,--though
that does much,

And men and children,—ay, and
women too,

Fighting for home, are rather to be
feared

Than mercenaries fighting for their
pay—

But, say you beat us, since such things
have been,

And, where this Juliers laughed, you
set your foot

Upon a streaming bloody plash, —
what then?

Stand you the more our Lord that
there you stand?

Lord it o'er troops whose force you
concentrate,

A pillared flame whereto all ardours
tend—

Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes
you amplify,

A cloud of smoke 'neath which all
shadows brood

But never, in this gentle spot of earth,
Can you become our Colombe, our
play-queen,

For whom, to furnish lilies for her
hair,

We'd pour our veins forth to enrich
the soil!

Our conqueror? Yes!—Our despot?
Yes!—Our Duke?

Know yourself, know us!

Berth. [*Who has been in thought.*]

Know your lady, also!

Very deferentially. To whom I
needs must exculpate myself

From having made a rash demand, at
least,

Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be
Her chief adviser, I submit my claims

[*Giving paper.*]

But, this step taken, take no further
step,

Until the Duchess shall pronounce
their worth.

Here be our meeting-place; at night,
its time:

Till when I humbly take the Lady's
leave!

[*He withdraws. As the DUCHESS
turns to VALENCE, the Courtiers
interchange glances and come
forward a little.*]

1st Court. So, this was their de-
vice!

2nd Court. No bad device!

3rd Court. You'd say they love
each other. Guibert's friend

From Cleves, and she, the Duchess!

4th Court. —And moreover,

That all Prince Berthold comes for, is
to help

Their loves!

5th Court. Pray, Guibert, what is
next to do?

Gui. [*Advancing.*] I laid my office
at the Duchess' foot—

Others. And I—and I—and I!

The D. I took them, sirs!

Gui. [*Apart to VALENCE.*] And
now, sir, I am simple knight
again—

Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet

That never bore affront : whate'er your birth,

As things stand now, I recognise yourself

If you'll accept experience of some date

As like to be the leading man o' the time,

Therefore as much above me now, as I

Seemed above you this morning.

Then, I offered

To fight you : will you be as generous And now fight me?

Val. Ask when my life is mine !

Gui. ('Tis hers now !)

Clug. [*Apart to VALENCE, as GUIBERT turns from him.*] You, sir, have insulted me

Grossly,—will grant me, too, the selfsame favour

You've granted him, just now, I make no question?

Val. I promise you, as him, sir !

Clug. Do you so?

Handsomely said ! I hold you to it, sir !

You'll get me reinstated in my office As you will Guibert !

The D. I would be alone !

[*They begin to retire slowly : as*

VALENCE is about to follow—

Alone sir—only with my heart,—you stay !

Gau. Your hear that ? Ah, light breaks upon me ! Cleves—

It was at Cleves some man harangued us all—

With great effect,—so those who listened said.

My thoughts being busy elsewhere : was this he ?

Guibert,—your strange, disinterested man !

Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend ! The modest worth you mean to patronise !

Hecares about no Duchesses, not he— His sole contest is with the wrongs of Cleves !

What, Guibert ? What, it breaks on you at last ?

Gui. Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof ! I'd I—

And in her very face—

Gau. Apply the match That fired the train,—and where would you be, pray ?

Gui. With him !

Gau. Stand, rather, safe outside with me !

The mine's charged—shall I furnish you the match

And place you properly?—To the ante-chamber !

Gui. Can you ?

Gau. Try me !—Your friend's in fortune !

Gui. Quick

To the ante-chamber !—He is pale with bliss !

Gau. No wonder ! Mark her eyes !

Gui. To the ante-chamber !

[*The Courtiers retire.*

The D. Sir, could you know all you have done for me

You were content ! You spoke, and I am saved !

Val. Be not too sanguine, Lady ! Ere you dream,

That transient flush of generosity Fades off, perchance ! The man, beside, is gone,

Whom we might lend ; but see the papers here—

Inalterably his requirement stays, And cold hard words have we to deal with now.

In that large eye there seemed a latent pride,

To self-denial not incompetent, But very like to hold itself dispensed

From such a grace—however, let us hope !

He is a noble spirit in noble form ! I wish he less had bent that brow to smile

As with the fancy how he could sub-ject

Himself upon occasion to—himself ! From rudeness, violence, you rest

secure ;

But do not think your Duchy rescued yet!

The D. You,—who have opened a new world to me,
Will never take the faded language up

Of that I leave? My Duchy—keeping it.

Or losing it—is that my sole world now?

Val. All have I spoken if you thence despise
Others; although the lowest, on true grounds,

Be worth more than the highest rule,
if I be;

As true a rule, on the true grounds!

The D. Nay, hear—
False, I will never—rash, I would not be!

This is indeed my Birthday—soul and body.

Its hours have done on me the work of years.

You hold the Requisition: ponder it!

If I have right—my duty's plain: if He—

Say so—nor ever change a tone of voice!

At night you meet the Prince—meet me at eve;

Till when, farewell! This discomposes you?

Believe in your own nature, and its force

Of renovating mine. I take my stand
Only as under me the earth is firm—

So, prove the first step stable, all will be!

That first, I choose [*Turns her hand on him.*] the next to take, choose you!

Val. [*After a pause.*] What drew down this on me! On me—

Dead once

She thus bids live, since all I hitherto

Thought dead in me, youth's ardours and amprize.

Burst into life before her, as she bids
Who needs them!—Whither will this

reach, where end?

Her hand's print burns on mine. . . .
Yet she's above—

So very far above me! All's too plain.

I served her when the others sank away,

And she rewards me as such souls reward

The changed voice, the suffusion of the cheek,

The eye's acceptance, the expressive hand

Reward, that's little, in her generous thought.

Though all to me . . .

I cannot so disclaim
Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is!

She loves me!

[*Looking at the Prince's papers.*]
Which love, these, perchance, forbid!

Can I decide against myself pronounce

She is the Duchess and no mate for me?

—Cleves, help me! Teach me, every haggard face.

To sorrow and endure! I will do right

Whatever be the issue—help me, Cleves!

ACT IV

Evening. SCENE.—*An Antechamber.*

Enter the Courtiers.

Man. Now then, that we may speak—how spring this mine?

Gau. Is Guibert ready for its match? He cools!

Not so friend Valence with the Duchess there!

“Stay, Valence, are not you my better self?”

And her cheek mantled

Gul. Well, she loves him, sir—
And more,—since you will have it!

grow cool,—
She's right: he's worth it.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

157

Gau. For his deeds to-day?
Say so!

Gau. What should I say beside?

Gau. Not this—
For friendship's sake leave this for
me to say

That we're the dupes of an egregious
cheat!

This plain, unpractised suitor, who
found way

To the Duchess thro' the merest die's
turn up

A year ago, had seen her and been
seen.

Loved and been loved—

Gai. Impossible!

Gau. --Nor say,

How sly and exquisite a trick more-
over,

Was this which taking not their
stand on facts

Boldly, for that had been endurable.

But, worming in their way by craft,
they choose

Resort to, rather,—and which you
and we.

Sheep-like, assist them in the playing
off!

The Duchess thus parades him as
preferred.

Not on the honest ground of prefer-
ence.

Seeing first, liking more, and there
an end—

But as we all had started equally,
And at the close of a fair race he
trioved

The only valiant, sage, and loyal
man.

And she, too, with the pretty fits and
starts.

The careless, winning, candid ignor-
ance

Of what the Prince might challenge
or forego

She had a hero in reserve! What
risk

Ran she? This deferential easy
Prince

Who brings his claims for her to ratify

—He's just her puppet for the nonce!
You'll see. —

Valence pronounces, as equitable,
Against him: off goes the con-
federate!

As equitably, Valence takes her hand!

The Chancellor. You run too fast
—her hand, no subject takes!

Do not! Our Archives hold her father's
will.

That will provide against such acci-
dents.

And gives next heir, Prince Berthold,
the reversion

Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wed-
ding so.

Gau. I know that, well as you,
but does the Prince?

Knows Berthold, think you, that this
plan, he helps,

For Valence's ennoblement,—would
end,

If crowned with the success which
seems its due,

In making him the very thing he plays.
The actual Duke of Juliers? All
agree

That Colombe's title waived or set
aside,

He is next heir.

The Chan. Incontrovertibly!

Gau. Gilbert, your match, now, to
the train!

Gai. Enough!

I'm with you—selfishness is best
again!

I thought of turning honest—what a
dream!

Let's wake now!

Gau. Selfish, friend, you never
were

'Twas but a series of revenges taken
On your unselfishness for prospering ill.

But now that you're grown wiser,
what's our course?

Gai. —Wait, I suppose, till Val-
ence weds our Lady,

And then, if we must needs revenge
ourselves.

Apprise the Prince—
Gau. —The Prince, ere then dis-
missed

With thanks for playing his mock part
so well?

Tell the Prince now, sir! Ay, this
very night.

Ere he accepts his dole and goes his
way.

Explain how such a marriage makes
him Duke,

I then trust his gratitude for the sur-
prise!

Gui. —Our Lady wedding Valence
all the same

As if the penalty were undisclosed!

Good! If she loves, she'll not dis-
own her love.

Throw Valence up—I wonder you
see that!

Gau. The shame of it—the sudden-
ness and shame!

Within her, the inclining heart—
without.

A terrible array of witnesses—

With Valence by, to keep her to her
word.

And Berthold's indignation or dis-
gust—

We'll try it!—Not that we can ven-
ture much:

Her confidence we've lost for ever—
Berthold's

Is all to gain!

Gui. To-night, then, venture we!
Yet—if lost confidence might be re-
newed?

Gau. Never in noble natures!
With the base ones,—

Twist off the crab's claw, wait a
smarting-while,

And something grows and grows and
gets to be

A mimic of the lost joint, just so like
As keeps in mind it never, never will

Replace its predecessor! Crabs do
that:

But lop the Lion's foot—and

Gui. To the Prince!

Gau. [*Aside.*] And come what will
to the lion's foot, I pay you

My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned
to pay!

[*Aloud.*] Footsteps . . . Himself! 'Tis
Valence breaks on us!

Exulting that their scheme succeeds!
—We'll hence—

And perfect ours! Consult the
Archives, first

Then, fortified with knowledge, seek
the Hall!

Clug. [*To GAUCELME as they re-
tire.*] You have not smiled so
since your father died!

*As they retire, enter VALENCE with
papers.*

Val. So must it be! I have ex-
amined these

With scarce a palpitating heart—so
calm.

Keeping her image almost wholly off,
Setting upon myself determined watch,

Repelling to the uttermost his claims.
And the result is . . . all men would

pronounce

Am not I, only, the result to be
Berthold is Heir; she has no shade

of right
To the distinction which divided us.

But, suffered to rule first I know not
why,

Her rule connived at by those Kings
and Popes,

To serve some devil's-purpose,—now
'tis gained.

Whate'er it is, the rule expires as
well.

—Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can
it be?

Eject it from your heart, her home!
—It stays!

Ah, the brave world that opens on us
both!

. . . Do my poor townsmen so es-
teem it? Cleves,

I need not your pale faces! This,
reward

For service done to you? Too horrible!
I never served you—'twas myself I

served!
Nay—served not—rather saved from

punishment
Which, had I failed you then, would

plague me now!
My life continues yours, and your life,

mine—
But if, to take God's gift, I swerve

no step—

Cleves!—if I breathe no prayer for it
—if she, [*Footsteps without.*]
Colombe, that comes now, freely
gives herself—
Will Cleves require, that, turning
thus to her,
I . . .

Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD.

—Pardon, sir—I did not look for you
Till night, in the Hall; nor have as
yet declared
My judgment to the Lady!

Berth. So I hoped.

Val. And yet I scarcely know why
that should check

The frank disclosure of it first to you—
What her right seems, and what, in
consequence,

She will decide on—

Berth. That I need not ask.

Val. You need not: I have proved
the Lady's mind—

And, justice being to do, dare act for
her.

Berth. Doubtless she has a very
noble mind!

Val. Oh, never fear but she'll in
each conjuncture

Bear herself bravely; she no whit
depends

On circumstance; as she adorns a
throne,

She had adorned . . .

Berth. . . . A cottage—in what
book

Have I read that, of every queen
that lived?

A throne? You have not been in-
structed, sure,

To forestall my request?

Val. 'Tis granted, sir—

My heart instructs me. I have
scrutinised

Your claims . . .

Berth. Ah—claims, you mean, at
first preferred!

I come, before the hour appointed
me,

To pray you let those claims at pre-
sent rest—

In favour of a new and stronger one.

Val. You shall not need a stronger:
on the part

Of the lady, all you offer I accept,
Since one clear right suffices: yours
is clear.

Propose!

Berth. I offer her my hand.

Val. Your hand?

Berth. A Duke's, yourself say;
and, at no far time,

Something here whispers me—the
Emperor's.

The Lady's mind is noble: which
induced

The seizure of occasion ere my claims
Were—settled, let us amicably say!

Val. Your hand!

Berth. (He will fall down and
kiss it next!)

Sir, this astonishment's too flattering—
Nor must you hold your mistress'
worth so cheap!

Enhance it, rather,—urge that blood
is blood

The daughter of the Burgraves, Land-
graves, Markgraves.

Remains their daughter; I shall
scarce gainsay!

Elsewhere or here, the Lady needs
must rule:

Like the Imperial crown's great
chrysoprase.

They talk of—somewhat out of
keeping there,

And yet no jewel for a meaner cap!

Val. You wed the Duchess?

Berth. Cry you mercy, friend!

Will the match influence many for-
tunes here?

A natural solicitude enough!

Be certain, no bad chance it proves
for you!

However high you take your present
stand.

There's prospect of a higher still
remove—

For Juliers will not be my resting-
place,

And, when I have to choose a substi-
tute

To rule the little burgh, I'll think of
you.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

491

To due completion, will suffice this
life.
And lead him at its grandest to the
grave.
After this star, out of a night he
springs:
A beggar's cradle for the throne of
thrones
He quits, so, mounting, feels each
step he mounts,
Nor, as from each to each exultingly
He passes, overleaps one grade of
joy.
This, for his own good: with the
world, each gift
Of God and man,—Reality, Tradition,
Fancy and Fact—so well environ
him.
That as a mystic panoply they serve
Of force, untenanted, to awe man-
kind.
And work his purpose out with half
the world,
While he, their master, dexterously
slips
From such encumbrance, is meantime
employed
With his own prowess on the other
half.
Thus shall he prosper, every day's
success
Adding, to what is He, a solid
strength
An aery might to what encircles him.
Till at the last, so life's routine lends
help.
That as the Emperor only breathes
and moves
His shadow shall be watched, his step
or stalk
Become a comfort or a portent; how
He trails his ermine take signifi-
cance,
Till even his power shall cease to be
most power,
And men shall dread his weakness
more, nor dare
Peril their earth its bravest, first and
best.
Its typified invincibility.
So shall he go on, greatening, till he
ends

The man of men, the spirit of all
flesh,
The fiery centre of an earthy
world!

The D. Some such a fortune I had
dreamed should rise

Out of my own—that is, above my
power

Seemed other, greater potencies to
stretch—

Val. For you?

The D. It was not I moved
there, I think:

But one I could,—though constantly
beside.

And aye approaching, still keep dis-
tant from.

And so adore. 'Twas a man moved
there!

Val. Who!

The D. I felt the spirit, never saw
the face!

Val. See it! 'Tis Berthold's! He
enabled you

To realise your vision!

The D. Berthold?

Val. Duke

Emperor to be: he proffers you his
hand.

The D. Generous and princely!

Val. He is all of this.

The D. Thanks, Berthold, for my
father's sake--no hand

Degrades me!

Val. You accept the proffered
hand?

The D. That he should love me!

Val. "Loved" I did not say!

Had that been love might so incline
the Prince

To the world's good, the world that's
at his foot.

I do not know, this moment, I should
dare

Desire that you refused the world—
and Cleves

The sacrifice he asks!

The D. Not love me, sir?

Val. He scarce affirmed it.

The D. May not deeds affirm?

Val. What does he? . . . Yes--
yes—very much he does!

All the shame saved, he thinks, and
sorrow saved—

Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks,—
Sorrow that's deeper than we dream,
perchance!

The D. Is not this love?

Val. So very much he does!
For look, you can descend now grace-
fully—

All doubts are banished, that the
world might have,

Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-
time,

May call up of your heart's sincere-
ness now:

To such, reply, "I could have kept
my rule—

"Increased it to the utmost of my
dreams—

"Yet I abjured it!" This, he does
for you:

It is munificently much!

The D. Still "much!"
But why is it not love, sir? Answer
me!

Val. Because not one of Berthold's
words and looks

Had gone with love's presentment of
a flower

To the beloved: because bold confi-
dence,

Open superiority, free pride—

Love owns not, yet were all that
Berthold owned:

Because where reason, even, finds no
flaw,

Unnerringly a lover's instinct may.

The D. You reason, then, and
doubt?

Val. I love, and know.

The D. You love?—How strange!
I never cast a thought

On that! Just see our selfishness—
you seemed

So much my own . . . I had no
ground—and yet,

I never dreamed another might divide
My power with you, much less ex-
ceed it!

Val. Lady,

I am yours wholly!

The D. Oh, no, no, not mine!

'Tis not the same now, never more
can be!

—Your first love, doubtless! Well,
what's gone from me?

What have I lost in you?

Val. My heart replies

No loss there! . . . So to Berthold
look again!

This offer of his hand, he bids me
make—

Its obvious magnitude is well to
weigh!

The D. She's . . . yes, she must
be very fair for you!

Val. I am a simple Advocate of
Cleves.

The D. You! With the heart and
brain that so helped me,

I fancied them exclusively my own,
Yet find are subject to a stronger sway!

She must be . . . tell me, is she very
fair?

Val. Most fair, beyond conception
or belief!

The D. Black eyes?—no matter!
Colombe, the world leads

Its life without you, whom your
friends professed

The only woman—see how true they
spoke!

One lived this while, who never saw
your face,

Nor heard your voice—unless . . .
Is she from Cleves?

Val. Cleves knows her well!

The D. Ah—just a fancy, now!
When you poured forth the wrongs of

Cleves,—I said.

—Thought, that is, afterward . . .

Val. You thought of me?

The D. Of what else? Only such
great cause, I thought,

For such effect—see what true love
can do!

Cleves is his love!—I almost fear to
ask

. . . Nor will not! This is idling
to our work!

Admit before the Prince, without re-
serve,

My claims misgrounded; then may
follow better

... When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,
 Was she in your mind?
Val. All done was done for her—
 —To humble me!
The D. She will be proud at least!
Val. She?
The D. When you tell her!
Val. That will never be!
The D. How—are there sweeter things you hope to tell?
 No, sir! You counselled me,—I counsel you
 In the one point I—any woman—can!
 Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next
 Say what you did through her, and she through you
 The praises of her beauty afterward! Will you?
Val. I dare not!
The D. Dare not?
Val. She I love
 Suspects not such a love in me.
The D. You jest!
Val. The lady is above me and away!
 Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,
 And the great heart, combine to press me low—
 But all the world calls rank divides us.
The D. Rank?
 Now grant me patience! Here's a man declares
 Oracularly in another's case—
 Sees the true value and the false, for them—
 Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see!
 You called my court's love worthless—so it turned:
 I threw away as dross my heap of wealth.
 And here you stickle for a piece or two!
 First—has she seen you?
Val. Yes!
The D. She loves you, then.
Val. One flash of hope burst—then succeeded night—
 And all's at darkest now. Impossible!

The D. We'll try: you are—so to speak—my subject yet?
Val. As ever—to the death!
The D. Obey me, then!
Val. I must!
The D. Approach her, and . . .
 No! First of all
 Get more assurance; "my instructress," say
 "Was great, descended from a line of kings,
 "And even fair"—(wait why I say this folly)
 "She said, of all men, none for eloquence,
 "Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)
 "The heart they sprung from,—none deserved like him
 "Who saved her at her need if she said this,
 "What should not one I love, say?"
Val. Heaven—this hope—
 Oh, lady, you are filling me with fire!
The D. Say this!—nor think I bid you cast aside
 One touch of all that awe and reverence!
 Nay—make her proud for once to heart's content
 That all this wealth of heart and soul's her own!
 Think you are all of this,—and, thinking it,
 . . . (Obey!)
Val. I cannot choose!
The D. Then, kneel to her!
 [VALENCE sinks on his knee.
 I dream!
Val. Have mercy! Yours, unto the death.—
 I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die.
The D. Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus?
 Even with you as with the world?
 I know
 This morning's service was no vulgar deed
 Whose motive, once it dares avow itself,
 Explains all done and infinitely more,

Said—'the father of a nobler cause,
 Your service named its true source—
 I say!
 The rest's unsaid again. The Duchess
 bids you.
 Rise, sir! The Prince's words were
 in debate.
Val. [Rising.] Rise! Truth, as
 ever, Lady, comes from you!
 I should rise—'t was that spoke for Cleves,
 can speak
 For Man—yet tremble now, that stood
 firm then!
 I laughed—for 'twas past tears—that
 Cleves should starve
 With all hearts beating loud the in-
 famy.
 And no tongue daring trust as much
 to do.
 Yet here, where all hearts speak,
 shall I be mute?
 Oh, lady, for your own sake look on
 me!
 On all I am, and have, and do—heart,
 brain,
 Body and soul, - this Valence and his
 gifts!
 I was proud once—I saw you—and
 they sank,
 So that each magnified a thousand
 times
 Were nothing to you—but such
 nothingness
 Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre
 prop,
 A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath
 enhance?
 What is my own desert? But should
 your love
 Have . . . there's no language but
 here . . . singled me.
 Then—Oh, that wild word—then!
 - I'm just to love,
 In generosity its attribute!
 Love, since you pleased to love!
 All's cleared—a stage
 For trial of the question kept so long
 For you—Is Love or Vanity the best?
 You, solve it for the world's sake—
 you, speak first
 What all will shout one day—you,
 vindicate

Our earth and be its angel! All is
 said.
 Lady, I offer nothing—I am yours.
 But for the cause' sake, look on me
 and I am
 And speak!
The D. I have received the Prince's
 message:
 Say, I prepare my answer!
Val. Take me, Cleves!
[He withdraws.]
The D. Mournful—that nothing's
 what it calls itself!
 Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty—more
 love!
 And, love in question, what may
 Berthold's be?
 I did ill to mistrust the world so
 soon—
 Already was this Berthold at my
 side!
 The valley-level has its hawks, no
 doubt:
 May not the rock-top have its eagles,
 too?
 Yet Valence . . . let me see his
 Rival then!

ACT V

Night. SCENE.—The Hall.

Enter BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.

Mel. And here you wait the
 matter's issue?

Berth. Here.

Mel. I don't regret I shut Amelius,
 then!

But tell me, on this grand disclosure,
 how

Behaved our spokesman with the
 forehead?

Berth. Oh,

Turned out no better than the fore-
 headless

Was dazzled not so very soon—that's
 all!

For my part, this is scarce the hasty,
 showy,

Chivalrous measure you give me
 credit of!

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

495

Perhaps I had the fancy, -but 'tis
gone-
Let her commence the unfriended
innocent,
And carry wrongs about from court
to court?
No, truly! The least shake of For-
tune's sand,
My uncle-Pope chokes in a cough-
ing-fit,
King Philip takes a fancy to blue
eyes,
And wondrously her claims would
brighten up!
Forth comes a new gloss on the
ancient law,
Overlooked provisos, past o'er pre-
mises,
Follow in plenty. No 'tis the safe
step,
The hour beneath the convent-wall's
lost!
Juliers and she, once mine, are ever
mine.
Mel. Which is to say, you, losing
heart already,
Elude the adventure!
Berth. Not so - or, if so
Why not confess at once, that I
advise
None of our kingly craft and guild
just now
To lay, one moment, down their
privilege
With the notion they can any time at
pleasure
Retake it - that may turn out hazar-
dous!
We seem, in Europe, pretty well at
end
O' the night, with our great masque:
those favoured few
Who keep the chamber's top, and
honour's chance
Of the early evening, may retain their
place
And figure as they list till out of
breath.
But it is growing late; and I ob-
serve
A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the
doorway

Not only bar new-comers entering
now,
But caution those who left, for any
cause,
And would return, that morning
draws too near;
The ball must die off, shut itself up.
We-
I think, may dance lights out and
sansime in,
And sleep off headache on our
frippery--
But friend the other, who cunningly
stole out,
And, after breathing the fresh air
outside,
Means to re-enter with a new cos-
tume,
Will be advised, I lack to bed, I fear.
I stick to privilege, on second
thoughts!
Mel. Yes - you evade the adven-
ture! And, beside,
Give yourself out for colder than you
are.
-King Philip, only, notes the lady's
eyes?
Don't they come in for somewhat of
the motive
With you too?
Berth. Yes--no: I am past that
now!
Gone 'tis--I cannot shut my eyes to
fact.
Of course, I might by forethought
and contrivance
Reason myself into a rapture. Gone!
And something better's come instead.
no doubt.
Mel. So be it! Yet, all the same,
proceed my way,
Though to your end; so shall you
prosper best.
The lady,--to be won for selfish
ends,--
Will be won easier my unselfish . . .
call it,
Romantic way.
Berth. Won easier?
Mel. Will not she?
Berth. There I profess humility
without bound!

Ill cannot speed—not I the Emperor!

Mel. And I should think the Emperor best waived,
From your description of her mood
and way!

You could look, if it pleased you,
into hearts;

But are too indolent and fond of
watching

Your own—you know that, for you
study it!

Berth. Had you but seen the
orator her friend,

So bold and voluble an hour before,
Abashed to earth at aspect of the
change!

Make her an Empress? Ah, that
changed the case!

. . . Oh, I read hearts! And for
my own behoof,

I court her with my true worth—see
the event!

I learned my final lesson on that head
When years ago, —my first and last
essay!

Before my uncle could obtain the ear
Of his superior, help me from the
dirt—

Priscilla left me for a Brabant Duke
Whose cheek was like the topaz on
his thumb.

I am past illusion on that score.

Mel. Here comes
The lady—

Berth. --And there you go! But
do not! Give me

Another chance to please you. Hear
me plead!

Mel. You'll keep, then, to the
lover, to the man?

*Enter the DUCHESS—followed by
ADOLF and SABYNE, and, after
an interval, by the Courtiers.*

Berth. Good auspice to our
meeting!

The D. May it prove!
—And you, sir, will be Emperor one
day?

Berth. (Ay—that's the point!) I
may be Emperor.

The D. 'Tis not for my sake only
I am proud

Of this you offer: I am prouder far
That from the highest state should
duly spring:

The highest, since most generous, of
deeds.

Berth. (Generous—still that!) You
underrate yourself.

You are, what I, to be complete, must
have—

Find now, and may not find, another
time.

While I career on all the world for
stage,

There needs at home my representa-
tive

The D. —Such, rather, would some
warrior-woman be

One dowered with lands and gold, or
rich in friends

One like yourself!

Berth. Lady, I am myself,
And have all these: I want what's not
myself.

Nor has all these. Why give one
hand two swords?

Here's one already: be a friend's
next gift

A silk glove, if you will—I have a
sword!

The D. You love me, then?

Berth. Your lineage I revere
Honour your virtue, in your truth
believe,

Do homage to your intellect, and bow
Before your peerless beauty.

The D. But, for love—

Berth. A further love I do not
understand.

Our best course is to say these hideous
truths.

And see them, once said, grow en-
durable.

Like waters shuddering from their
central bed,

Black with the midnight bowels of
the earth,

That, once up-spouted by an earth-
quake's throes,

A portent and a terror—soon sub-
side,

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

497

Freshen apace, take gold and rain-
bow hues
in sunshine, sleep in shadow, and,
at last,
Grow common to the earth as hills or
trees—
Accepted by all things they came to
scare.
The D. You cannot love, then?
Berth. —Charlemagne, perhaps!
Are you not over-curious in love-
lore?
The D. I have become so, very
recently.
It seems, then, I shall best deserve
esteem,
Respect, and all your candour pro-
mises,
By putting on a calculating mood
Asking the terms of my becoming
yours?
Berth. Let me not do myself in-
justice, neither!
Because I will not condescend to
fictions
That promise what my soul can ne'er
acquit,
It does not follow that my guarded
phrase
May not include far more of what
you seek,
Than wide professions of less scrupu-
lous men.
You will be Empress, once for all
with me
The Pope disputes supremacy—you
stand
And none gainsays, the Earth's first
woman!
The D. That—
Or simple Lady of Ravestein again?
Berth. The matter's not in my
arbitrement!
Now I have made my claims—which
I regret—
Cede one, cede all!
The D. This claim then, you
enforce?
Berth. The world looks on.
The D. And when must I decide?
Berth. "When," Lady? Have I
said thus much so promptly

For nothing? Poured out, with such
pulses, a once
What I might else have suffered to
ooze forth
Droplet by droplet in a life-time loss
For aught less than as prompt an
answer, too?
All's fairly told now—who can tell
you more?
The D. I do not see him!
Berth. I shall ne'er deceive!
This offer had been made befitting
Would time allow the better setting
forth
The good of it, with what is not so
good,
Advantage, and disparagement as
well—
But as it is, the sum of both must
serve.
I am already weary of this place
My thoughts are next stage on to
Rome. Decide!
The Empire—or, not even Juliers
now!
Hail to the Empress—farewell to the
Duchess!
[*The Courtiers, who have been
drawing nearer and nearer, in-
terpose.*
Courtiers. . . . "Farewell," Prince?
when we break in at our risk
Cluz. (Almost upon Court-licence
trespassing) —
Courtiers. —To point out how your
claims are valid yet!
You know not, by the Duke her
Father's will,
The lady, if she weds beneath her
rank,
Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's
favour—
So 'tis expressly stipulate. And if
It can be shown 'tis her intent to wed
A subject, then yourself, next heir, by
right
Succeed to Juliers.
Berth. What insanity? . . .
Gui. Sir, there's one Valence—the
pale fiery man
You saw and heard, this morning—
thought, no doubt,

Was of considerable standing here
I put it to your penetration, Prince,
If aught save love, the truest love for
her,

Had made him serve the lady as he
did!

He's simply a poor advocate of Cleves
Creeps here with difficulty, finds a
place

With danger, gets in by a miracle,
And for the first time meets the
Lady's face—

So runs the story—is that credible?
For, first—no sooner in, than he's
apprised

Fortunes have changed; you are all-
powerful here,

The Lady as powerless: he stands
fast by her!

The D. [*Aside.*] (And do such
deeds spring up from love alone?)

Gui. But here occurs the question,
does the lady

Love him again? I say, how else
can she?

Can she forget how he stood singly
forth

In her defence, dared outrage all of
us,

Insult yourself—for what save love's
reward?

The D. (And is love then the sole
reward of love?)

Gui. But, love him as she may and
must—you ask.

Means she to wed him? "Yes,"
both nether answer!

Both, in their pride, point out the sole
result—

Nought less would he accept nor she
propose!

For each conjuncture was she great
enough—

Will be, for this!

Chor. Though, now that this is
known,

Policy, doubtless, urges she deny...

The D.—What, sir, and where-
fore?—since I am not sure

That all is any other than you say?

You take this Valence, hold him close
to me,

Him with his actions: can I choose
but I

I am not sure, love truer shows
Than in this man, you hate and would
degrade.

Yet, with your worst abatement, show
me this

Nor am I—thus made look within
myself.

Ere I had dared, now that the lady
is dared.

Sure that I do not love her!
Gui. Hear you, Prince!

Berth. And will this policy
may this prattle me?

Unless to prove with what alacrity
You give your lady's secrets to the
world.

How much indebted, for discover-
ing

That quality, you make me, will I
found

When next a keeper for my own's to
seek!

Courtiers. "Our Lady?"
Berth.—She assuredly remains!

The D. Ah, Prince—and you too
can be generous?

You could renounce your power, if
this were so.

And let me, as these phrase it, wed
my love.

Yet keep my Duchy? You perhaps
exceed

Him, even, in disinterestedness!

Berth. How, lady, should all this
affect my purpose?

Your will and choice are still as ever,
free!

Say, you have known a worthier than
myself

In mind and heart, of happier fortune
and face:

Others must have their birthright! I
have gifts,

To balance theirs, not blot them out
of sight!

Against a hundred other qualities,
I lay the prize I offer. I am no-
thing—

Wed you the Empire?

The D. And my heart away?

Takes him—'a simple heart is t'
aside,

The ermine o'er a he- less breast
embraced!

Oh Heaven, this mockery has been
played too oft!

Once, to surprise the angels—twice,
that fiends

Recording, might be proud they
chose not so—

Thrice, many thousand times, to teach
the world

All men should pause, misdoubt their
strength, since men

Could have such chance yet fail so
signally,

But ever—ever—this farewell to
heaven,

Welcome to earth—this taking death
for life—

This spurning love and kneeling to
the world—

Oh Heaven, it is too often and too
old!

Mel. Well, on this point—what but
an absurd rumour

Arises—these, its source—its subject,
you!

Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,
They say, your service claims the
lady's hand!

Of course, nor Prince nor lady can
respond—

Yet something must be said—for,
were it true

You made such claim, the Prince
would . . .

Val. Well, sir, would?

Mel.—Not only probably with-
draw his suit,

But, very like, the lady might be
forced

Accept your own.—Oh, there are
reasons why!

But you'll excuse at present all save
this—

I think so. What we want is, your
own witness.

For, or against—her good, or yours:
decide!

Val. [*Mel.*] Be it her good if she
accounts it so!

[*After a contest.*] For what am I but
hers, to choose as she?

Who knows how far, beside, the light
from her

May reach, and dwell with, what she
looks upon?

Mel. [*To the Prince.*] Now to him,
you!

Berth. [*To VALENCE.*] My friend
acquaints you, sir,

The noise runs . . .

Val. . . . Prince, how fortunate
are you,

Wedding her as you will, in spite of it,
To show belief in love! Let her but
love you,

All else you disregard! What else
can be?

You know how love is incompatible
With falsehood—purifies, assimilates
All other passions to itself.

Mel. Ay, sir:

But softly! Where in the object we
select,

Such love is, perchance, wanting?

Val. Then, indeed,
What is it you can take?

Mel. Nay—ask the world!
Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious
name,

An influence o'er mankind!

Val. When man perceives . . .
—Ah, I can only speak as for myself!

The D. Speak for yourself!

Val. May I?—no, I have spoken,
And time's gone by!—Had I seen
such an one—

As I loved her—weighing thoroughly
that word—

So should my task be to evolve her
love

If for myself!—if for another—well!

Berth. Heroic truly! And your
sole reward,—

The secret pride in yielding up your
own?

Val. Who thought upon reward?
And yet how much

Comes after—Oh what amplest re-
compense!

Is the knowledge of her, nought?
the memory, nought?

—Lady, should such an one have
looked on you,
Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote
the world,
And say, love can go unrequited
here!
You will have blessed him to his
whole life's end—
Low passions hindered, baser cares
kept back,
All goodness cherished where you
dwelt—and dwell.
What would he have? He holds you
—you, both form,
And mind, in his,—where self-love
makes such room
For love of you, he would not serve
you now
The vulgar way, — repulse your
enemies,
Win you new realms, or best, in
saving you
Die blissfully — that's past so long
ago!
He wishes you no need, thought, care
of him—
Your good, by any means, himself
unseen,
Away, forgotten!—He gives that life's
task up,
As it were . . . but this charge
which I return—
*[Offers the Requisition, which she
takes.]*
Wishing your good!
The D. [Having subscribed it.] And
opportune, sir—
Since at a birthday's close, like this
of mine,
Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.
Most on a wedding day, as mine is
too,
Should gifts be thought of: yours
comes first by right.
Ask of me!
Berth. He shall have whate'er he
asks,
For your sake and his own!
Val. [Aside.] If I should ask—
The withered bunch of flowers she
wears—perhaps,

One last touch of her hand, I never
more
Shall see!
*[After a pause, presenting his
paper to the Prince.]*
Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of
Cleves!
Berth. I will, sir!
*The D. [As VALENCE prepares to
retire.]*—Nay, do out your duty,
first!
You bore this paper: I have registered
My answer to it: read it and have
done! *[VALENCE reads it.]*
—I take him—give up Juliers and the
world!
This is my Birth-day.
Mel. Berthold, my one hero
Of the world she gives up, one friend
worth my books,
Sole man I think it pays the pains to
watch.—
Speak, for I know you through your
Popes and Kings!
Berth. [After a pause.] Lady, well
rewarded! Sir, as well deserved!
I could not imitate—I hardly envy—
I do admire you! All is for the
best!
Too costly a flower were you, I see
it now,
To pluck and set upon my barren
helm
To wither—any garish plume will do!
I'll not insult you and refuse your
Duchy—
You can so well afford to yield it me,
And I were left, without it, sadly off!
As it is—for me—if that will flatter
you,
A somewhat wearier life seems to
remain
Than I thought possible where . . .
'faith, their life
Begins already—they're too occupied
To listen—and few words content me
best!
[Abruptly to the Courtiers.] I am your
Duke, though! Who obey me
here?
The D. Adolf and Sabyne follow
us—

Gui. [*Starting from the Courtiers.*]

—And I?

Do I not follow them, if I mayn't
you?

Shall not I get some little duties up
At Ravestein and emulate the rest?

God save you, Gaucelme! 'Tis my
Birthday, too!

Berth. You happy handful that re-
main with me

. . . That is, with Dietrich the black
Barnabite

I shall leave over you—will earn your
wages,

Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his trade!
Meantime,—go copy me the pre-
cedents

Of every installation, proper styles
And pedigrees of all your Juliers'
Dukes—

While I prepare to go on my old way,
And somewhat wearily, I must confess!

The D. [*With a light joyous laugh
as she turns from them.*] Come,
Valence, to our friends—God's
earth . . .

Val. [*As she falls into his arms.*]—
And thee

I DEDICATE

THIS LAST ATTEMPT FOR THE PRESENT AT DRAMATIC POETRY

TO A GREAT DRAMATIC POET;

"WISHING WHAT I WRITE MAY BE READ BY HIS LIGHT:"

IF A PHRASE ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED, BY NOT THE LEAST
WORTHY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES,

TO SHAKESPEARE,

MAY BE APPLIED HERE, BY ONE WHOSE SOLE PRIVILEGE
IS IN A GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

LURIA

A TRAGEDY

PERSONS

LURIA, a Moor, Commander of the Florentine Forces.
 HUSAIN, a Moor, his friend.
 PUCCIO, the old Florentine Commander, now LURIA's Chief Officer.
 BRACCIO, Commissary of the Republic of Florence.
 JACOPO (LAPO), his Secretary.
 TIBURZIO, Commander of the Pisans.
 DOMIZIA, a noble Florentine Lady.

TIME, 14—.

SCENE.—LURIA'S Camp between Florence and Pisa.

ACT I

MORNING.

BRACCIO, *as dictating to his Secretary*; PUCCIO *standing by*.

Brac. [To *Puc.*] Then, you join battle in an hour?

Puc. Not I.

Luria, the Captain.

Brac. [To the *Sec.*] "In an hour, the battle."

[To *Puc.*] Sir, let your eye run o'er this loose digest.

And see if very much of your report Have slipped away through my civilian phrase.

Does this instruct the Signory aright How army stands with army?

Puc. [Taking the paper.] All seems here:

—That Luria, seizing with our City's force

The several points of vantage, hill and plain,

Shuts Pisa safe from help on every side,

And baffling the Lucchese arrived too late,

Must, in the battle he delivers now, Beat her best troops and first of chiefs.

Brac. So sure?

Tiburzio's a consummate captain too!

Puc. Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand.

Brac. [To the *Sec.*] "The Signory hold Pisa in their hand!"

Your own proved soldiership's our warrant, sir:

So, while my secretary ends his task, Have out two horsemen, by the open roads,

To post with it to Florence!

Puc. [Returning the paper.] All seems here:

Unless . . . Ser Braccio, 'tis my last report!

Since Pisa's outbreak, and my overthrow,

And Luria's hastening at the city's
call
To save her, as he only could, no
doubt ;
Till now that she is saved or sure to
be,—
Whatever you tell Florence, I tell
you :
Each day's note you, her Commissary,
make
Of Luria's movements, I myself
supply.
No youngster am I longer, to my
cost ;
Therefore while Florence gloried in
her choice
And vaunted Luria, whom but Luria,
still,
As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct,
faith,
Had never met in any man before,
I saw no pressing need to swell the
cry.
But now, this last report and I have
done—
So, ere to-night comes with its roar
of praise,
'Twere not amiss if some one old i'
the trade
Subscribed with, "True, for once
rash counsel's best :
"This Moor of the bad faith and
doubtful race,
"This boy to whose untried sagacity,
"Raw valour, Florence trusts without
reserve
"The charge to save her, justifies her
choice ;
"In no point has this stranger failed
his friends ;
"Now praise ! " I say this, and it is
not here.
Brac. [*To the Sec.*] Write, "Puccio,
superseded in the charge
"By Luria, bears full witness to his
worth,
"And no reward our Signory can give
"Their champion but he'll back it
cheerfully."
Aught more? Five minutes hence,
both messengers !

[PUCCIO goes.]

Brac. [*After a pause, and while he
slowly tears the paper into shreds.*]
I think . . . pray God, I hold in fit
contempt
This warfare's noble art and ordering,
And,—once the brace of prizers fairly
matched,
Poleaxe with poleaxe, knife with knife
as good,—
Spit properly at what men term their
skill . . .
Yet here I think our fighter has the
odds ;
With Pisa's strength diminished thus
and thus,
Such points of vantage in our hands
and such,
With Lucca off the stage, too,—all's
assured :
Luria must win this battle. Write
the Court,
That Luria's trial end and sentence
pass !
Sec. Patron,—
Brac. Aye, Lapo ?
Sec. If you trip, I fall ;
'Tis in self-interest I speak—
Brac. Nay, nay,
You overshoot the mark, my Lapo !
Nay !
When did I say pure love's impos-
sible ?
I make you daily write those red
cheeks thin,
Load your young brow with what con-
cerns it least,
And, when we visit Florence, let you
pace
The Piazza by my side as if we
talked,
Where all your old acquaintances
may see :
You'd die for me, I should not be
surprised !
Now then !
Sec. Sir, look about and love
yourself !
Step after step the Signory and you
Tread gay till this tremendous point's
to pass ;
Which, pass not, pass not, ere you
ask yourself,

Bears the brain steadily such draughts
 of fire,
 Or too delicious may not prove the
 pride
 Of this long secret Trial you dared
 plan,
 Dare execute, you solitary here,
 With the grey-headed toothless fools
 at home,
 Who think themselves your lords,
 they are such slaves?
 If they pronounce this sentence as
 you bid,
 Declare the treason, claim its
 penalty,
 And sudden out of all the blaze of
 life,
 On the best minute of his brightest
 day,
 From that adoring army at his back,
 Thro' Florence' joyous crowds before
 his face,
 Into the dark you beckon Luria . . .
Brac. Then—
 Why, Lapo, when the fighting-people
 vaunt,
 We of the other craft and mystery,
 May we not smile demure, the danger
 past?
Sec. Sir, no, no, no,—the danger.
 and your spirit
 At watch and ward? Where's
 danger on your part,
 With that thin flitting instantaneous
 steel,
 'Gainst the blind bull-front of a brute-
 force world?
 If Luria, that's to perish sure as fate,
 Should have been really guiltless after
 all?
Brac. Ah, you have thought that?
Sec. Here I sit, your scribe.
 And in and out goes Luria, days and
 nights;
 This Puccio comes; the Moor his
 other friend.
 Husain; they talk—all that's feigned
 easily;
 He speaks (I would not listen if I
 could).
 Reads, orders, counsels;—but he
 rests sometimes,—

I see him stand and eat, sleep
 stretched an hour
 On the lynx-skins, yonder; hold his
 bared black arms
 Into the sun from the tent-opening;
 laugh
 When his horse drops the forage from
 his teeth
 And neighs to hear him hum his
 Moorish songs,
 That man believes in Florence, as the
 Saint
 Tied to the wheel believes in God!
Brac. How strange—
 You too have thought that!
Sec. Do but you think too,
 And all is saved! I only have to
 write,
 The man seemed false awhile, proves
 true at last;
 Bury it . . . so I write to the Sig-
 nory . . .
 Bury this Trial in your breasts for ever.
 Blot it from things or done or dreamed
 about,
 So Luria shall receive his meed to-day
 With no suspicion what reverse was
 near.—
 As if no meteoric finger hushed
 The doom-word just on the destroyer's
 lip,
 Motioned him off, and let life's sun
 fall straight.
Brac. [*Looks to the wall of the tent.*]
 Did he draw that?
Sec. With charcoal, when the
 watch
 Made the report at midnight; Lady
 Domizia
 Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you
 remember;
 That is his fancy how a Moorish front
 Might join to, and complete, the
 body,—a sketch,—
 And again where the cloak hangs,
 yonder in the shadow.
Brac. He loves that woman.
Sec. She is sent the spy
 Of Florence,—spies on you as you on
 him:
 Florence, if only for Domizia's sake,
 Is surely safe. What shall I write?

Brac. I see—
 A Moorish front, nor of such ill
 design!
 Lapo, there's one thing plain and
 positive;
 Man seeks his own good at the whole
 world's cost.
 What? If to lead our troops, stand
 forth our chiefs,
 And hold our fate, and see us at their
 beck,
 Yet render up the charge when peace
 returned,
 Have ever proved too much for
 Florentines,
 Even for the best and bravest of our-
 selves—
 If in the struggle when the soldier's
 sword
 Should sink its point before the
 statist's pen,
 And the calm head replace the violent
 hand
 Virtue on virtue still have fallen away
 Before ambition with unvarying fate,
 Till Florence' self at last in bitterness
 Be forced to own such falls the natural
 end,
 And, sparing further to expose her
 sons
 To a vain strife and profitless disgrace,
 Declare "The Foreigner, one not my
 child,
 "Shall henceforth lead my troops,
 reach height by height
 "The glory, then descend into the
 shame;
 "So shall rebellion be less guilt in
 him,
 "And punishment the easier task for
 me"
 —If on the best of us this brand she
 set,
 Can I suppose an utter alien here,
 This Luria, our inevitable foe,
 Confessed a mercenary and a Moor,
 Born free from any ties that bind the
 rest
 Of common faith in Heaven or hope
 on Earth,
 No Past with us, no Future,—such a
 Spirit

Shall hold the path from which our
 staunchest broke,
 Stand firm where every famed pre-
 cursor fell?
 My Lapo, I will frankly say, these
 proofs
 So duly noted of the man's intent,
 Are for the doting fools at home, not
 me;
 The charges here, they may be true
 or false.
 —What is set down? Errors and
 oversights.
 This dallying interchange of cour-
 tesies
 With Pisa's General,—all that, hour
 by hour,
 Puccio's pale discontent has furnished
 us,
 Of petulant speeches, inconsiderate
 acts,
 Now overhazard, overcaution now;
 Even that he loves this lady who be-
 lieves
 She outwits Florence, and whom
 Florence posted
 By my procurement here, to spy on
 me,
 Lest I one minute lose her from my
 sight—
 She who remembering her whole
 House's fall,
 That nest of traitors strangled in the
 birth,
 Now labours to make Luria . . .
 poor device
 As plain . . . the instrument of her
 revenge!
 —That she is ever at his ear to prompt
 Inordinate conceptions of his worth,
 Exorbitant belief in its reward,
 And after, when sure disappointment
 follows,
 Proportionable rage at such a wrong—
 Why, all these reasons, while I urge
 them most,
 Weigh with me less than least; as
 nothing weigh!
 Upon that broad Man's heart of his.
 I go!
 On what I know must be, yet while
 I live

Will never be, because I live and know!
 Brute-force shall not rule Florence!
 Intellect
 May rule her, bad or good as chance supplies,—
 But Intellect it shall be, pure if bad,
 And Intellect's tradition so kept up
 Till the good comes—'twas Intellect
 that ruled,
 Not Brute-force bringing from the
 battle-field
 The attributes of wisdom, foresight's
 graces
 We lent it there to lure its grossness
 on;
 All which it took for earnest and kept
 safe
 To show against us in our market-
 place,
 Just as the plumes and tags and
 sword-man's-gear
 (Fetched from the camp where at
 their foolish best
 When all was done they frightened
 nobody)
 Perk in our faces in the street, for-
 sooth,
 With our own warrant and allowance.
 No!
 The whole procedure's overcharged,
 —its end
 In too strict keeping with the bad first
 step.
 To conquer Pisa was sheer inspiration?
 Well then, to perish for a single
 fault,
 Let that be simple justice!—There,
 my Lapo!
 A Moorish front ill suits our Duomo's
 body—
 Blot it out—and bid Luria's sentence
 come!
 [LURIA *who, with DOMIZIA, has
 entered unobserved at the close of
 the last phrase, now advancing.*
 And Luria, Luria, what of Luria now?
Brac. Ah, you so close, Sir? Lady
 Domizia too?
 I said it needs must be a busy moment
 For one like you—that you were now
 i' the thick

Of your duties, doubtless, while we
 idlers sate . . .

Lur. No—in that paper,—it was
 in that paper

What you were saying!

Brac. Oh—my day's dispatch!
 I censure you to Florence: will you
 see?

Lur. See your dispatch, your last,
 for the first time?

Well, if I should, now? For in truth,
 Domizia,

He would be forced to set about
 another,

In his sly cool way, the true Florentine,
 To mention that important circum-
 stance;

So while he wrote I should gain time,
 such time!

Do not send this!

Brac. And wherefore?

Lur. These Lucchese
 Are not arrived—they never will
 arrive!

And I must fight to-day, arrived or not:
 And I shall beat Tiburzio, that is sure:
 And then will be arriving my Lucchese,
 But slowly, oh so slowly, just in time
 To look upon my battle from the hills,
 Like a late moon, of use to nobody!
 And I must break my battle up, send
 forth,

Surround on this side, hold in check
 on that—

Then comes to-morrow, we negotiate,
 You make me send for fresh instruc-
 tions home,

—Incompleteness, incompleteness!

Brac. Ah, we scribes!
 Why, I had registered that very point,
 The non-appearance of our foes' ally,
 As a most happy fortune; both at
 once

Were formidable—singly faced, each
 falls.

Lur. So no great battle for my
 Florentines!

No crowning deed, decisive and
 complete,

For all of them, the simple as the wise,
 Old, young, alike, that do not under-
 stand

Our wearisome pedantic art of war,
By which we prove retreat may be
success,
Delay—best speed,—half loss, at
times,—whole gain :
They want results—as if it were their
fault !

And you, with warmest wish to be my
friend,

Will not be able now to simply say
“Your servant has performed his
task—enough !

“You ordered, he has executed :
good !

“Now walk the streets in holiday
attire,

“Congratulate your friends, till noon
strikes fierce,

“Then form bright groups beneath
the Duomo's shade !”

No ! you will have to argue and ex-
plain,

Persuade them all is not so ill in the
end,

Tease, tire them out ! Arrive, arrive,
Lucchese !

Dom. Well, you will triumph for
the Past enough,

Whatever be the Present's chance—
no service

Falls to the ground with Florence ;
she awaits

Her saviour, will receive him fittingly.

Lur. Ah, Braccio, you know
Florence . . . will she, think you,

Receive one . . . what means “fit-
tingly receive ?”

—Receive compatriots, doubtless—I
am none :

And yet Domizia promises so much !

Brac. Kind women still give men a
woman's prize.

I know not o'er which gate most
boughs will arch,

Nor if the Square will wave red flags
or blue—

I should have judged, the fullest of
rewards

Our State gave Luria, when she made
him chief

Of her whole force, in her best
Captain's place.

Lur. That my reward ? Florence
on my account

Relieved Ser Puccio?—mark you, my
reward !

And Puccio's having all the fight's
true joy—

Goes here and there, directs, may
fight himself,

While I must order, stand aloof, o'er
see !

That was my calling—there was my
true place !

I should have felt, in some one over
me,

Florence impersonate, my visible
Head,

As I am over Puccio,—taking life
Directly from her eye !—They give
me you !

But do you cross me, set me half to
work ?

I enjoy nothing—but I will, for
once !

Decide, shall we join battle ? may I
wait ?

Brac. Let us compound the matter ;
wait till noon ;

Then, no arrival,—

Lur. Ah, noon comes too fast !
I wonder, do you guess why I delay

Involuntarily the final blow
As long as possible ? Peace follows it !

Florence at peace, and the calm
studious heads

Come out again, the penetrating eyes ;
As if a spell broke, all's resumed,

each art
You boast, more vivid that it slept
awhile !

'Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white
palace-front

The interrupted scaffold climbs anew ;
The walls are peopled by the Painter's

brush ;
The Statue to its niche ascends to
dwell ;

The Present's noise and trouble have
retired

And left the eternal Past to rule once
more. —

You speak its speech and read its
records plain,

Greece lives with you, each Roman
breathes your friend.

-But Luria—where will then be
Luria's place?

Dom. Highest in honour, for that
Past's own sake,
Of which his actions, sealing up the
sum

By saving all that went before from
wreck,

Will range as part, with which he
worshipped too.

Lur. Then I may walk and watch
you in your streets.

Leading the life my rough life helps
no more,

So different, so new, so beautiful—

Nor fear that you will tire to see parade
The club that slew the lion, now that

crooks

And shepherd-pipes come into use
again?

For very lone and silent seems my East
In its drear vastness—still it spreads,
and still

No Braccios, no Domizias anywhere
Not ever more?—Well, well, to day
is ours!

Dom. [*To BRAC.*] Should he not
have been one of us?

Lur. Oh, no!

Not one of you, and so escape the thrill
Of coming into you, and changing
thus,—

Feeling a soul grow on me that restricts
The boundless unrest of the savage
heart!

The sea heaves up, hangs loaded o'er
the land.

Breaks there and buries its tumult-
uous strength;

Horror, and silence, and a pause
awhile;

Lo, inland glides the gulf-stream,
miles away.

In rapture of assent, subdued and still.
Neath those strange banks, those un-
imagin'd skies!

Well, 'tis not sure the quiet lasts for
ever!

Your placid heads still find our hands
new work;

Some minutes' chance—there comes
the need of mine—

And, all resolved on, I too hear at last.
Oh, you must find some use for me,
Ser Braccio!

You hold my strength; 'twere best
dispose of it!

What you created, see that you find
food for—

I shall be dangerous else!

Brac. How dangerous, Sir?

Lur. Oh, there are many ways,

Domizia warns me,

And one with half the power that I
possess,

Grows very formidable! Do you
doubt?

Why, first, who holds the army . . .

Dom. While we talk.

Morn wears, we keep you from your
proper place

In the field!—

Lur. Nay, to the field I
move no more!

My part is done, and Puccio's may
begin!

I cannot trench upon his province
longer

With any face.—You think yourselves
so safe?

Why see—in concert with Tiburzio,
now—

One could . . .

Dom. A trumpet!

Lur. My Lucchese at last!

Arrived, as sure as Florence stands!
your leave! [*Springs out.*]

Dom. How plainly is true greatness
charactered

By such unconsciousness as Luria's
here,

And sharing least the secret of itself!
Be it with head that schemes or hand

that acts,

Such save the world which none but
they could save,

Yet think whatever they did, that
world could do.

Brac. Yes; and how worthy note,
that those same great ones

In hand or head, with such uncon-
sciousness

And all its due entailed humility,
 Should I never shrink, so far as I per-
 ceive,
 From taking up whatever offices
 Involve the whole world's safety or
 mishap,
 Into their mild hands as a thing of
 course!
 The Statist finds it natural to lead
 The mob who might as easily lead
 him—
 The Soldier marshals men who know
 as much—
 Statist and Soldier verily believe!
 While we poor scribes . . . you catch
 me thinking, now,
 That I shall in this very letter write
 What none of you are able! To it,
 Lapo! [DOMIZIA goes.
 This last, worst, all affected childish
 fit
 Of Luria's, this be-praised uncon-
 sciousness,
 Convinces me: the Past was no child's
 play;
 It was a man beat Pisa, — not a
 child.
 All's mere dissimulation— to remove
 The fear, he best knows we should
 entertain.
 The utmost danger was at hand. Is't
 written?
 Now make a duplicate, lest this should
 fail,
 And speak your fullest on the other
 side.
Sec. I noticed he was busily repair-
 ing
 My half-effacement of his Duomo
 sketch,
 And, while he spoke of Florence,
 turned to it,
 As the Mage Negro King to Christ
 the Babe—
 I judge his childishness the true re-
 lapse
 To boyhood of a man who has worked
 lately,
 And presently will work, so, mean-
 time, plays:
 Whence more than ever I believe in
 him.

Brac. [After a pause.] The sword!
 At best, the soldier, as he says,
 In Florence—the black face, the bar-
 barous name,
 For Italy to boast her show of the
 age,
 Her man of men!— To Florence with
 each letter!

ACT II

NOON.

Dom. Well, Florence, shall I reach
 thee, pierce thy heart
 Thro' all its safeguards? Hate is
 said to help—
 Quicken the eye, invigorate the arm,
 And this my hate, made up of many
 hates,
 Might stand in scorn of visible instru-
 ment,
 And will thee dead:—yet do I trust
 it not,
 Nor Man's devices, nor Heaven's
 memory
 Of wickedness forgot on Earth so
 soon,
 But thy own nature,—Hell and thee I
 trust,
 To keep thee constant in that wicked-
 ness.
 Where my revenge may meet thee:
 turn aside
 A single step, for gratitude, or
 shame,—
 Grace but this Luria, this wild mass
 of rage
 That I prepare to launch against thee
 now,
 With other payment than thy noblest
 found,—
 Give his desert for once its due
 reward,—
 And past thee would my sure destruc-
 tion roll.
 But thou, who mad'st our House thy
 sacrifice,
 It cannot be thou wilt except this Moor
 From the accustomed fate of zeal and
 truth;

Thou wilt deny his looked-for recompense,
 And then—I reach thee! Old and trained, my sire
 Could bow down on his quiet broken heart,
 Die awe-struck and submissive, when at last
 The strange blow came for the expected wreath;
 And Porzio passed in blind wilderness
 To exile, never to return, they say,
 Perplexed in his frank simple honest soul,
 As if some natural law had changed,
 —how else
 Could Florence, on plain fact pronouncing thus,
 Judge Porzio's actions worthy such an end?
 But Berto, with the ever-passionate pulse,
 —Oh that long night, its dreadful hour on hour,
 In which no way of getting his fair fame
 From their inexplicable charges free,
 Was found, save pouring forth the impatient blood
 To show its colour whether false or no!
 My brothers never had a friend like me
 Close in their need to watch the time,
 then speak,
 —Burst with a wakening laughter on their dream,
 Say, Florence was all falseness, so false here,—
 And show them what a simple task remained—
 To leave dreams, lies, and punish in God's name
 The City wedded to its wickedness—
 None stood by them as I by Luria stand!
 So, when the stranger cheated of his due
 Turns on thee as his rapid nature bids,
 Then, Florence, think, a hireling at thy throat
 For the first outrage, think who bore thy last,

Yet mutely in forlorn obedience died!
 He comes . . . his friend . . . black faces in the camp
 Where moved those peerless brows and eyes of old!

Enter LURIA and HERAIN.

Lur. Well, and the movement—let it as you hope?

'Tis Lucca?

Lur. Ah, the Pisan trumpet merely!

Tiburzio's envoy, I must needs receive—

Dom. Whom I withdraw before: yet if I lingered

You could not wonder, for my time fleets fast;

The overtaking night brings such reward!

And where will then be room for me? Yet still

Remember who was first to promise it,

And envies those who also can perform! [*Goes.*]

Lur. This trumpet from the Pisans?—

Hus. In the camp; A very noble presence—Braccio's visage

On Puccio's body—calm and fixed and good;

A man I seem as I had seen before—Most like, it was some statue had the face.

Lur. Admit him! This will prove the last delay!

Hus. Ay, friend, go on, and die thou going on!

Thou heard'st what the grave woman said but now:

To-night rewards thee! That is well to hear!

But stop not therefore: hear it, and go on!

Lur. Oh, their reward and triumph and the rest

They round me in the ears with, all day long?

All that, I never take for earnest, friend!

Well would it suit us,—their triumphal
Or storied pillar,— thee and me, the
Moors!

But gratitude in those Italian eyes

That, we shall get!

Hus. It is too cold an air
Our sun rose out of yonder mound
Of mist

Where is he now? So I trust none
Of them!

Lur. Truly?

Hus. I doubt and fear. There
Stands a wall

'Twixt our expansive and explosive
Race

And those absorbing, concentrating
Men!

They use thee!

Lur. And I feel it, Husain; yes,
And care not—yes, alien force like
Mine

Is only called to play its part out-
Side

Their different nature; where its sole
Use seems

To fight with and keep off an adverse
Force

As alien,—which repelled, mine too
Withdraws:

Inside, they know not what to do
With me;

So I have told them laughingly and
oft,

But long since I prepared to learn the
worst.

Hus. What is the worst?

Lur. I will forestall them, Husain.
And speak my destiny, they dare not
speak—

Banish myself before they find the
heart!

I will be first to say, "the work re-
wards!"

"I know, for all your praise, my use
is over,

"So may it be!—meanwhile 'tis best
I go,

"And carry safe my memories of you
all

"To other scenes of action, newer
lands."—

Thus leaving them confirmed in their
belief

They would not easily have tired of
me!

You think this hard to say?

Hus. Say it or not,
So thou but go, so they but let thee
go!

This hating people, that hate each the
other,

And in one blandness to us Moors
unite—

Locked each to each like slippery
snakes, I say,

Which still in all their tangles, hiss-
ing tongue

And threatening tail, ne'er do each
other harm;

While any creature of a better blood,
They seem to fight for, while they
circle safe

And never touch it,—pines without a
wound,

Withers away before their eyes and
breath.

See thou, if Puccio come not safely
out

Of Braccio's grasp, this Braccio sworn
his foe,

As Braccio safely from Domizia's toils
Who hates him most!—But thou, the
friend of all

... Come out of them!

Lur. The Pisan trumpet now!

Hus. Breathe free—it is an enemy,
no friend! [*Goes*]

Lur. He keeps his instincts, no
new culture mars

Their perfect use in him: just so the
brutes

Rest not, are anxious without visible
cause,

When change is in the elements at
work,

Which man's trained senses fail to
apprehend.

But here,—he takes the distant
chariot-wheels

For thunder, festal fire for lightning's
flash.

The finer traits of cultivated life
For treachery and malevolence: I see!

Enter TIBURZIO.

Lur. Quick, sir, your message. I
but wait your message
To sound the charge. You bring not
overtures
For truce?—I would not, for your
General's sake,
You spoke of truce—a time to fight
is come,
And whatsoe'er the fight's event, he
keeps
His honest soldier's name to beat me
with,
Or leaves me all himself to beat, I
trust!

Tib. I am Tiburzio.

Lur. You? 'Tis—yes . . .

Tiburzio!

You were the last to keep the ford i'
the valley
From Puccio, when I threw in suc-
cours there!

Why, I was on the heights—thro' the
defile

Ten minutes after, when the prey was
lost;

You wore an open skull-cap with a
twist

Of water-reeds—the plume being
hewn away;

While I drove down my battle from
the heights,

--I saw with my own eyes!

Tib. And you are Luria

Who sent my cohort, that laid down
its arms

In error of the battle-signal's sense,
Back safely to me at the critical
time—

One of a hundred deeds—I know
you! Therefore

To none but you could I . . .

Lur. No truce, Tiburzio!

Tib. Luria, you know the peril's
imminent

On Pisa,—that you have us in the
toils,

Us her last safeguard, all that inter-
cepts

The rage of her implacablest of foes
From Pisa,—if we fall to-day, she falls.

Tho' Lucca will arrive, yet, 'tis too
late.

You have so plainly here the best of it,
That you must feel, brave soldier as
you are,

How dangerous we grow in this ex-
treme,

How truly formidable by despair.

Still, probabilities should have their
weight—

The extremest chance is ours, but,
that chance failing,

You win this battle. Wherefore say
I this?

To be well apprehended when I add,
This danger absolutely comes from
you.

Were you who threaten thus, a
Florentine . . .

Lur. Sir, I am nearer Florence
than her sons.

I can, and have perhaps obliged the
State,

Nor paid a mere son's duty.

Tib. Even so!

Were you the son of Florence, yet
endued

With all your present nobleness of
soul,

No question, what I must communi-
cate

Would not detach you from her.

Lur. Me, detach?

Tib. Time urges: you will ruin
presently

Pisa, you never knew, for Florence'
sake

You think you know. I have from
time to time

Made prize of certain secret missives
sent

From Braccio here, the Commissary,
home—

And knowing Florence otherwise, I
piece

The entire chain out, from these its
scattered links.

Your trial occupies the Signory;

They sit in judgment on your conduct
now!

When men at home enquire into the
acts

Which in the field e'en foes appreciate . . .

Brief, they are Florentines ! You, saving them,
Will seek the sure destruction saviours find.

Lur. Tiburzio—

Tib. All the wonder is of course !
I am not here to teach you, nor direct,
Only to loyally apprise—scarce that.
This is the latest letter, sealed and safe,

As it left here an hour ago. One way
Of two thought free to Florence, I command,
The duplicate is on its road : but this,—

Read it, and then I shall have more to say.

Lur. Florence !

Tib. Now, were yourself a Florentine,

This letter, let it hold the worst it can,

Would be no reason you should fall away—

The Mother city is the mother still,
And recognition of the children's service

Her own affair ; reward—there's no reward !

But you are bound by quite another tie ;

Nor Nature shows, nor Reason, why at first

A foreigner, born friend to all alike,
Should give himself to any special State

More than another, stand by Florence's side

Rather than Pisa's—'tis as fair a city,
You war against, as that you fight for—famed

As well as she in story, graced no less
With noble heads and patriotic hearts,—

Nor to a stranger's eye would either cause,

Stripped of the cumulative loves and hates

Which take importance from familiar view,

Stand as the Right, and Sole to be upheld.

Therefore, should the preponderating gift

Of love and trust, Florence was first to throw,

Which made you hers not Pisa's, void the scale,—

Old ties dissolving, things resume their place

And all begins again. Break seal and read !

At least let Pisa offer for you now !

And I, as a good Pisan, shall rejoice .
Tho' for myself I lose, in gaining you,

This last fight and its opportunity ;
The chance it brings of saving Pisa

yet,
Or in the turn of battle dying so

That shame should want its extreme bitterness.

Lur. Tiburzio, you that fight for Pisa now

As I for Florence . . . say my chance were yours !

You read this letter, and you find . . . no, no !

Too mad !

Tib. I read the letter, find they purpose

When I have crushed their foe, to crush me : well ?

Lur. You, being their captain, what is it you do ?

Tib. Why as it is, all cities are alike—

Pisa will pay me much as Florence you ;

I shall be as belied, whate'er the event,

As you, or more : my weak head, they will say,

Prompted this last expedient, my faint heart

Entailed on them indelible disgrace,
Both which defects ask proper punish-

ment.

Another tenure of obedience, mine !
You are no son of Pisa's : break and read !

Lur. And act on what I read ?
What act were fit ?

If the firm-fixed foundation of my
faith

In Florence, which to me stands for
Mankind,

If that breaks up and, disimprison-
ing

From the abyss . . . Ah friend, it
cannot be !

You may be very sage, yet . . . all
the world

Having to fail, or your sagacity,
You do not wish to find yourself alone !

What would the world be worth ?
Whose love be sure ?

The world remains — you are de-
ceived !

Tib. Your hand !

I lead the vanguard. — If you fall, be-
side,

The better — I am left to speak ! Forme,
This was my duty, nor would I rejoice
If I could help, it misses its effect :
And after all you will look gallantly
Found dead here with that letter in
your breast !

Lur. Tiburzio — I would see these
people once

And test them ere I answer finally !

At your arrival let the trumpet sound :
If mine returns not then the wonted
cry,

It means that I believe — am Pisa's !

Tib.

Well !

[*Goes.*

Lur. My heart will have it he
speaks true ! My blood

Beats close to this Tiburzio as a
friend.

If he had stopt into my watch-tent,
night

And the wild desert full of foes
around,

I should have broke the bread and
given the salt

Secure, and, when my hour of watch
was done,

Taken my turn to sleep between his
knees,

Safe in the untroubled brow and
honest cheek.

Oh, world, where all things pass and
nought abides,

Oh, life the long mutation — is it so ?
Is it with life as with the body's
change ?

Where, e'en tho' better follow,
good must pass,

Nor manhood's strength can mate
with boyhood's grace,

Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find
strength,

But silently the first gift dies away,
And tho' the new stays, never both
at once !

Life's time of savage instinct's o'er
with me,

It fades and dies away, past trusting
more,

As if to punish the ingratitude
With which I turned to grow in these
new lights,

And learned to look with European
eyes.

Yet it is better, this cold certain way,
Where Braccio's brow tells nothing, —
Puccio's mouth,

Domizia's eyes reject the searcher —
yes —

For on their calm sagacity I lean,
Their sense of right, deliberate choice
of good,

Sure, as they know my deeds, they
deal with me.

Yes, that is better — that is best of all !
Such faith stays when mere wild be-
lief would go !

Yes — when the desert creature's heart,
at fault

Amid the scattering tempest's pillared
sands,

Betrays its steps into the pathless
drift —

The calm instructed eye of man holds
fast

By the sole bearing of the visible
star,

Sure that when slow the whirling
wreck subsides,

The boundaries, lost now, shall be
found again, —

The palm-trees and the pyramid over
all.

Yes : I trust Florence — Pisa is de-
ceived !

Enter BRACCIO, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.

Brac. Noon's at an end: no Lucca? You must fight.

Lur. Do you remember ever, gentle friends,

I am no Florentine?

Dom. It is yourself

Who still are forcing us importunately,

To bear in mind what else we should forget.

Lur. For loss!—For what I lose in being none!

No shrewd man, such as you yourselves respect,

But would remind you of the stranger's loss

In natural friends and advocates at home,

Hereditary loves, even rivalships, With precedents for honour and reward.

Still, there's a gain, too! If you take it so,

The stranger's lot has special gain as well!

Do you forget there was my own far East

I might have given away myself to, once,

As now to Florence, and for such a gift,

Stood there like a descended Deity?

There, worship greets us! what do I get here? [*Shows the letter.*

See! Chance has put into my hand the means

Of knowing what I earn, before I work!

Should I fight better, should I fight the worse,

With your crown palpably before me? see!

Here lies my whole reward! Best know it now,

Or keep it for the end's entire delight?

Brac. If you serve Florence as the vulgar serve,

For swordsmen's pay alone, break seal and read!

In that case, you will find your full desert!

Lur. Give me my one last happy moment, friends!

You need me now, and all the gratitude

This letter can contain will never balance

The after-feeling that your need's at end!

This moment . . . Oh, the Fast has use with you!

Its sword still flashes is not flung aside

With the past praise, in a dark corner yet!

How say you? 'Tis not so with Florentines—

Captains of yours—for them, the ended war

Is but a first step to the peace begun—He who did well in war, just earns

the right

To begin doing well in peace, you know!

And certain my precursors,—would not such

Look to themselves in such a chance as this,

Secure the ground they trod upon, perhaps?

For I have heard, by fits, or seemed to hear,

Of strange occurrences, ingratitude, Treachery even,—say that one of you

Surmised this letter carried what might turn

To harm hereafter, cause him prejudice—

What would he do?

Dom. [*Hastily.*] Thank God and take revenge!

Turn her own force against the city straight,

And even at the moment when the foe

Sounded defiance . . .

[*TIBURZIO'S trumpet sounds in the distance.*

Lur. Ah, you Florentines!

So would you do? Wisely for you,
no doubt!
My simple Moorish instinct bids me
sink
The obligation you relieve me from,
Still deeper! [*To Puc.*] Sound our
answer, I should say!
And thus:—[*Tearing the paper.*]—
The battle! That solves every
doubt!

ACT III

AFTERNOON.

Puccio, as making a report to
JACOPO.

Puc. And here, your Captain must
report the rest;
For, as I say, the main engagement
over,
And Luria's special part in it per-
formed,
How could subalterns like myself
expect
Leisure or leave to occupy the field
And glean what dropped from his
wide harvesting?
I thought, when Lucca at the battle's
end
Came up, just as the Pisan centre
broke,
That Luria would detach me and
prevent
The flying Pisans seeking what they
found,
Friends in the rear, a point to rally by:
But no—more honourable proved my
post!
I had the august captive to escort
Safe to our camp—some other could
pursue,
Fight, and be famous; gentler chance
was mine
Tiburzio's wounded spirit must be
soothed!
He's in the tent there.
Jac. Is the substance down?
I write—"The vanguard beaten, and
both wings
In full retreat—Tiburzio prisoner"—

And now,—"That they fell back
and formed again,
On Lucca's coming."—Why then,
after all,
'Tis half a victory, no conclusive
one?

Puc. Two operations where a sole
had served.

Jac. And Luria's fault was—?

Puc. Oh, for fault . . . not
much!

He led the attack, a thought impetu-
ously,

—There's commonly more prudence;
now, he seemed

To hurry measures, otherwise well-
judged;

By over concentrating strength, at
first,

Against the enemy's van, both sides
escaped:

That's reparable—yet it is a fault.

Enter BRACCIO.

Jac. As good as a full victory to
Florence,

With the advantage of a fault be-
side—

What is it, Puccio?—that by pressing
forward

With too impetuous . . .

Brac. The report anon!

Thanks, Sir—you have elsewhere a
charge, I know. [*Puccio goes.*]

There's nothing done but I would do
again;

Yet, Lapo, it may be the Past proves
nothing.

And Luria has kept faithful to the
end!

Jac. I was for waiting.

Brac. Yes: so was not I!

He could not choose but tear that
letter—true!

Still, certain of his tones, I mind,
and looks—

You saw, too, with a fresher soul
than I.

So, Porzio seemed an injured man,
they say!

Well, I have gone upon the broad,
sure ground.

Enter LURIA, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.

Lur. [To Puc.] Say, at his pleasure
I will see Tiburzio:
All's at his pleasure.

Dom. [To Lur.] Were I not so
sure

You would reject, as you do con-
stantly,

Praise,—I might tell you what you
have deserved

Of Florence by this last and crowning
feat:

But words are vain!

Lur. Nay, you may praise
me now!

I want instruction every hour, I find,
On points where once I saw least
need of it;

And praise, I have been used to do
without,

Seems not so easy to dispense with now,
After a battle half one's strength is
gone—

And glorious passion in us once ap-
peased,

Our reason's calm cold dreadful voice
begins.

All justice, power and beauty scarce
appear

Monopolised by Florence, as of late,
To me, the stranger; you, no doubt,
may know

Why Pisa needs must give her rival
place;

And I am growing nearer you, perhaps,
For I, too, want to know and be
assured,

When a cause ceases to reward itself,
Its friend needs fresh sustainments;
praise is one,

And here stand you—you, Lady,
praise me well!

But yours—(your pardon)—is un-
learned praise:

To the motive, the endeavour, the
heart's self,

Your quick sense looks; you crown
and call aright

The soul of the purpose, ere 'tis
shaped as act,

Takes flesh i' the world, and clothes
itself a king;

But when the act comes, stands for
what 'tis worth,

—Here's Puccio, the skilled soldier;
he's my judge!

Was all well, Puccio?

Puc. All was . . . must be well:
If we beat Lucca presently, as doubt-
less . . .

—No, there's no doubt, we must—All
was well done.

Lur. In truth? But you are of the
trade, my Puccio!

You have the fellow-craftsman's sym-
pathy!

There's none knows like a fellow of
the craft,

The all unestimated sum of pains
That go to a success the world can
see;

They praise then, but the best they
never know:

—But you know!—Oh, if envy mix
with it,

Hate even, still the bottom praise of
all,

Whatever be the dregs, that drop's
pure gold!

—For nothing's like it: nothing else
records

Those daily, nightly drippings in the
dark

Of the heart's blood, the world lets
drop away

For ever . . . So, pure gold that praise
must be!

And I have yours, my soldier: yet
the best

Is still to come—there's one looks on
apart

Whom all refers to, failure or suc-
cess;

What's done might be our best, our
utmost work,

And yet inadequate to serve his need:
Here's Braccio now, for Florence—

here's our service—

Well done for us, is it well done for
him?

His chosen engine, tasked to its full
strength,

Answers his end?—Should he have
chosen higher?

Do we help Florence, now our best
is done?

Brac. This battle with the foregone
services,
Saves Florence.

Lur. Why then, all is very well !
Here am I in the middle of my friends,
Who know me and who love me, one
and all !

And yet . . . 'tis like . . . this in-
stant while I speak
Is like the turning moment of a dream
When . . . Ah, you are not foreigners
like me !

Well then, one always dreams of
friends at home,
And always comes, I say, the turning
point

When something changes in the
friendly eyes
That love and look on you . . . so
slight, so slight . . .

And yet it tells you they are dead and
gone,
Or changed and enemies, for all their
words,

And all is mockery, and a maddening
show !

You, now, so kind here, all you
Florentines,

What is it in your eyes . . . those lips,
those brows . . .

Nobody spoke it . . . yet I know it
well !

Come now—this battle saves you, all's
at end,

Your use of me is o'er, for good, for
evil.—

Come now, what's done against me,
while I speak,

In Florence? Come ! I feel it in
my blood,

My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my
ear

That spite of all this smiling and kind
speech

You are betraying me ! What is it
you do?

Have it your way, and think my use
is over;

That you are saved and may throw off
the mask

Have it my way, and think more work
remains

Which I could do,—so show you fear
me not !

Or prudent be, or generous, as you
choose.

But tell me—tell what I refused to
know

At noon, lest heart should fail me !
Well? That letter?

My fate is known at Florence ! What
is it?

Brac. Sir, I shall not conceal what
you divine :

It is no novelty for innocence
To be suspected, but a privilege :

The after certain compensation comes.
Charges, I say not whether false or
true,

Have been preferred against you some
time since,

Which Florence was bound, plainly,
to receive,

And which are therefore undergoing
now

The due investigation. That is all.
I doubt not but your innocence will
shine

Apparent and illustrious, as to me,
To them this evening, when the trial
ends.

Lur. My trial?

Dom. Florence, Florence to
the end,

My whole heart thanks thee !

Puc. [*To BRAC.*] What is
“Trial,” Sir?

It was not for a trial—surely, no—
I furnished you those notes from time
to time?

I hold myself aggrieved—I am a
man—

And I might speak,—ay, and speak
mere truth, too,

And yet not mean at bottom of my
heart

What should assist a—Trial, do you
say?

You should have told me !

Dom. Nay, go on, go on !

His sentence! Do they sentence
him? What is it?

The block? Wheel?

Brac. Sentence there is none as
yet,

Nor shall I give my own opinion here
Of what it should be, or is like to be,
When it is passed, applaud or disap-
prove!

Up to that point, what is there to
impugn?

Lur. They are right, then, to try
me?

Brac. I assert,
Maintain, and justify the absolute
right

Of Florence to do all she can have
done

In this procedure,—standing on her
guard,

Receiving even services like yours
With utmost fit suspicious wariness.

In other matters—keep the mummery
up!

Take all the experiences of the whole
world,

Each knowledge that broke thro' a
heart to life,

Each reasoning which, to work out,
cost a brain,

—In other cases, know these, warrant
these.

And then dispense with them—'tis
very well!

Let friend trust friend, and love de-
mand its like,

And gratitude be claimed for benefits.—
There's grace in that—and when the

fresh heart breaks,
The new brain proves a martyr, what

of it?

Where is the matter of one moth the
more

Singed in the candle, at a summer's
end?

But Florence is no simple John or
James

To have his toy, his fancy, his conceit,
That he's the one excepted man by
fate,

And, when fate shows him he's mis-
taken there,

Die with all good men's praise, and
yield his place

To Paul and George intent to try
their chance:

Florence exists because these pass
away;

She's a contrivance to supply a type
Of Man, which men's deficiencies
refuse;

She binds so many, that she grows
out of them—

Stands steady o'er their numbers, tho'
they change

And pass away—there's always what
upholds,

Always enough to fashion the great
show!

As, see, yon hanging city, in the sun,
Of shapely cloud substantially the
same!

A thousand vapours rise and sink again,
Are interfused, and live their life and
die,—

Yet ever hangs the steady show i' the
air

Under the sun's straight influence:
that is well!

That is worth Heaven to hold, and
God to bless!

And so is Florence,—the unseen sun
above,

Which draws and holds suspended all
of us—

Binds transient mists and vapours
into one,

Differing from each and better than
they all.

And shall she dare to stake this per-
manence

On any one man's faith? Man's heart
is weak,

And its temptations many: let her
prove

Each servant to the very uttermost
Before she grant him her reward, I

say!

Dom. And as for hearts she chances
to mistake,

That are not destined to receive
reward,

Tho' they deserve it, did she only know!
—What should she do for these?

Brac. What does she not?
 Say, that she gives them but herself
 to serve!
 Here's Luria what had profited his
 strength,
 When half-an-hour of sober fancying
 Had shown him step by step the use-
 lessness
 Of strength exerted for its proper
 sake?
 But the truth is, she did create that
 strength,
 Drew to the end the corresponding
 means.
 The world is wide—are we the only
 men?
 Oh, for the time, the social purpose'
 sake,
 Use words agreed on, bandy epithets,
 Call any man, sole Great and Wise
 and Good!
 But shall we, therefore, standing by
 ourselves,
 Insult our souls and God with the
 same speech?
 There, swarm the ignoble thousands
 under Him—
 What marks us from the hundreds and
 the tens?
 Florence took up, turned all one way
 the soul
 Of Luria with its fires, and here he
 stands!
 She takes me out of all the world as
 him,
 Fixing my coldness till like ice it
 stays
 The fire! So, Braccio, Luria, which
 is best?
Lur. Ah, brave me? And is this
 indeed the way
 To gain your good word and sincere
 esteem?
 Am I the baited tiger that must turn
 And fight his baiters to deserve their
 praise?
 Obedience has no fruit then?—Be it so!
 Do you indeed remember I stand here
 The Captain of the conquering army,
 —mine—
 With all your tokens, praise and
 promise, ready

To show for what their names were
 when you gave,
 Not what you style them now you
 take away?
 If I call in my troops to arbitrate,
 And in their first enthusiastic thrill
 Of victory, tell them how you menace
 me—
 Commending to their plain instinctive
 sense,
 My story first, your comment after-
 ward,—
 Will they take, think you, part with
 you or me?
 When I say simply, I, the man they
 know,
 Ending my work, ask payment, and
 find Florence
 Has all this while provided silently
 Against the day of pay and proving
 words,
 By what you call my sentence that's
 to come
 Will they sit waiting it complacently?
 When I resist that sentence at their
 head
 What will you do, my mild an-
 tagonist?
Brac. I will rise up like fire, proud
 and triumphant
 That Florence knew you thoroughly
 and by me,
 And so was saved: "See, Italy," I'll
 say,
 "The need of our precautions—here's
 a man
 "Was far advanced, just touched on
 the reward
 "Less subtle cities had accorded
 him—
 "But we were wiser; at the end
 comes this!"
 And from that minute all your strength
 will go—
 The very stones of Florence cry against
 The all-exacting, unenduring Luria,
 Resenting her first slight probation
 thus,
 As if he, only, shone and cast no
 shade,
 He, only, walked the earth with
 privilege

Against suspicion, free from causing
fear—

So, for the first inquisitive mother's-
word,

He turned, and stood on his defence,
forsooth!

Reward? You will not be worth
punishment!

Lur. And Florence knew me thus!
Thus I have lived,—

And thus you, with the clear fine
intellect,

Braccio, the cold acute instructed
mind,

Out of the stir, so calm and uncon-
fused,

Reported me—how could you other-
wise!

Ay?—and what dropped from you,
just now, moreover?

Your information, Puccio?—Did your
skill

And understanding sympathy approve
Such a report of me? Was this the
end?

Or is even this the end? Can I
stop here—

You, Lady, with the woman's stand
apart,

The heart to see with, not those
learned eyes,

. . . I cannot fathom why you should
destroy

The unoffending man, you call your
friend—

So, looking at the good examples
here

Of friendship, 'tis but natural I ask
Had you a further end, in all you

spoke,
Than profit to me, in those instances

Of perfidy from Florence to her
chiefs—

All I remember now for the first
time?

Dom. I am a daughter of the
Traversari,

Sister of Porzio and of Berto both.
I have foreseen all that has come to

pass.
I knew the Florence that could doubt
their faith,

Must needs mistrust a stranger's
holding back

Reward from them, must hold back
his reward.

And I believed, the shame they bore
and died,

He would not bear, but live and fight
against—

Seeing he was of other stuff than they.
Lur. Hear them! All these against

one Foreigner!

And all this while, where is in the
whole world

To his good faith a single witness?
Tiburzio. [*Who has entered during*

the preceding dialogue.] Here!

Thus I bear witness to it, not in word
But deed. I live for Pisa; she's not

lost
By many chances—much prevents
from that!

Her army has been beaten, I am here,
But Lucca comes at last, one chance

exists.
I rather had see Pisa three times lost

Than saved by any traitor, even by
you.

The example of a traitor's happy
fortune

Would bring more evil in the end
than good.

Pisa rejects such: save yourself and
her!

I, in her name, resign forthwith to
you

My charge,—the highest of her
offices.

You shall not, by my counsel, turn on
Florence

Her army, give her calumny that
ground—

Nor bring it with you: be you all we
gain,

And all she'll lose, a head to deck
some bridge,

And save the crown's cost that should
deck the head.

Leave her to perish in her perfidy,
Plague-stricken and stripped naked to

all eyes,
A proverb and a by-word in all
mouths!

Go you to Pisa—Florence is my place—

Leave me to tell her of the rectitude.
I, from the first, told Pisa, knowing it
To Pisa!

Dom. Ah, my Braccio, are you caught?

Brac. Puccio, good soldier and selected man,

Whom I have ever kept beneath my eye.

Ready, as fit, to serve in this event
Florence, who clear foretold it from the first—

Thro' me, she gives you the command and charge

She takes, thro' me, from him who held it late!

A painful trial, very sore, was yours:
All that could draw out, marshal in array

The selfish passions 'gainst the public good—

Slights, scorns, neglects, were heaped on you to bear:

And ever you did bear and bow the head!

It had been sorry trial, to precede
Your feet, hold up the promise of reward

For luring gleam; your footsteps kept the track

Thro' dark and doubt: take all the light at once!

Trial is over, consummation shines:
Well have you served, as well henceforth command!

Puc. No, no . . . I dare not . . .
I am grateful—glad;

But Luria—you shall understand he's wronged

And he's my Captain—this is not the way

We soldiers climb to fortune: think again!

The sentence is not even passed, beside!

I dare not . . . where's the soldier could?

Lur. Now, Florence—

Is it to be?—You will know all the strength

Of the savage—to your neck the proof must go?

You will prove the brute nature?
Ah, I see!

The savage plainly is impassible
He keeps his calm way thro' insulting words,

Sarcastic looks, sharp gestures—one of which

Would stop you, fatal to your finer sense:

But if he steadily advances, still
Without a mark upon his callous hide,
Thro' the mere brushwood you grow angry with,

And leave the tatters of your flesh upon,

You have to learn that when the true bar comes,

The thick mid forest, the real obstacle,
Which when you reach, you give the labour up,

Nor dash on, but lie down composed before,

—He goes against it, like the brute he is!

It falls before him, or he dies in his course!

I kept my course thro' past ingratitude—

I saw—it does seem, now, as if I saw,
Could not but see, those insults as they fell,

—Ay, let them glance from off me, very like,

Laughing, perhaps, to think the quality

You grew so bold on, while you so despised

The Moor's dull mute inapprehensive mood,

Was saving you; I bore and kept my course:

Now real wrong fronts me—see if I succumb!

Florence withstands me?—I will punish her!

At night my sentence will arrive, you say!

Till then I cannot, if I would, rebel—
—Unauthorised to lay my office down,

Retaining my full power to will and do:

After—it is to see. Tiburzio, thanks!

Go—you are free—join Lucca. I suspend

All further operations till to-night.

Thank you, and for the silence most of all!

[*To Brac.*] Let my complacent bland accuser go,

And carry his self-approving head and heart

Safe thro' the army which would trample him

Dead in a moment at my word or sign!

Go, Sir, to Florence; tell friends what I say—

That while I wait their sentence, theirs waits them!

[*To Dom.*] You, Lady,—you have black Italian eyes!

I would be generous if I might. . . .

Oh, yes—

For I remember how so oft you seemed

Inclined at heart to break the barrier down

Which Florence makes God build between us both.

Alas, for generosity! this hour

Demands strict justice—bear it as you may!

I must,—the Moor,—the Savage,—pardon you!

[*To Puc.*] Puccio, my trusty soldier, see them forth!—

The game, watch how my betters play, no more.

Puc. But mankind are not pieces—there's your fault!

You cannot push them, and, the first move made,

I lean back to study what the next should be,

In confidence that when 'tis fixed upon,

You'll find just where you left them, black and whites:

Men go on moving when your hand's away.

You build, I notice, firm on Luria's faith

This whole time,—firmer than I choose to build,

Who never doubted it—of old, that is—

With Luria in his ordinary mind:

But now, oppression makes the wise man mad—

How do I know he will not turn and stand

And hold his own against you, as he may?

Suppose that he withdraws to Pisa—well,—

Then, even if all happens to your wish,

Which is a chance . . .

Jac. Nay—'twas an oversight, Not waiting till the proper warrant came:

You could not take what was not ours to give.

But when at night the sentence really comes,

And Florence authorises past dispute Luria's removal and your own advance,

You will perceive your duty and accept?

Puc. Accept what? muster-rolls of soldiers' names?

An army upon paper?—I want men, Their hearts as well as hands—and

where's a heart

That's not with Luria, in the multitude I come from walking thro' by Luria's

side?

You gave him to them, set him on to grow,

ACT IV

EVENING.

Enter PUCCIO and JACOPO.

Puc. What Luria will do? Ah, 'tis yours, fair Sir,

Your and your subtle-witted master's part,

To tell me that: I tell you what he can.

Jac. Friend, you mistake my station! I observe

Head-like, upon their trunk, one
blood feeds both,

They feel him there, and live, and
well know why!

For they do know, if you are
ignorant,

Who kept his own place and respected
theirs,

Managed their ease yet never spared
his own.

All was your deed: another might
have served

There's peradventure no such dearth
of men

But you chose Luria--so they grew
to him:

And now, for nothing they can under-
stand,

Luria's removed, off is to roll the
head--

The body's mine--much I shall do
with it!

Jac. That's at the worst!

Puc. No--at the best, it is!

Best, do you hear? I saw them by
his side;

Only we two with Luria in the camp
Are left that know the secret? You
think that?

Hear what I saw: from rear to van,
no heart

But felt the quiet patient hero there
Was wronged, nor in the moveless
ranks an eye

But glancing told its fellow the whole
story

Of that convicted silent knot of spies
Who passed thro' them to Florence;
they might pass--

No breast but gladlier beat when free
of them!

Our troops will catch up Luria, close
him round,

Lead him to Florence as their natural
lord,

Partake his fortunes, live or die with
him!

Jac. And by mistake catch up along
with him

Puccio, no doubt, compelled in self-
despite

To still continue Second in Command!

Puc. No, Sir, no second nor so
fortunate!

Your tricks succeed with me too well
for that!

I am as you have made me, and shall
die

A mere trained fighting hack to serve
your end;

With words, you laugh at while they
leave your mouth,

For my life's rules and ordinance of
God!

I have to do my duty, keep my faith,
And earn my praise, and guard against
my blame,

As I was trained. I shall accept your
charge,

And fight against one better than
myself,

And my own heart's conviction of his
worth

That, you may count on!--just as
hitherto

I have gone on, persuaded I was
wronged,

Slighted, and all the terms we learn
by rote,--

All because Luria superseded me--
Because the better nature, fresh-

inspired,
Mounted above me to its proper
place!

What mattered all the kindly gracious-
ness,

And cordial brother's bearing? This
was clear

I, once the captain, was subaltern now,
And so must keep complaining like

a fool!

Go, take the curse of a lost man, I say!

You neither play your puppets to the
end,

Nor treat the real man,--for his real-
ness' sake

Thrust rudely in their place,--with
such regard

As might console them for their altered
rank.

Me, the mere steady soldier, you
depose

For Luria, and here's all that he
deserves!

Of what account, then, are my services?

One word for all: whatever Luria does,

—If backed by his indignant troops he turns

In self-defence and Florence goes to ground,

Or for a signal, everlasting shame,
He pardons you, and simply seeks his friends

And heads the Pisan and the Lucchese troops

—And if I, for you ingrates past belief,
Resolve to fight against a man called false,

Who, inasmuch as he is true, fights there

Whichever way he wins, he wins for me,

For every soldier, for the common good!

Sir, chronicling the rest, omit not this!

As they go, enter LURIA and HUSAIN.

Hus. Saw'st thou?—For they are gone! The world lies bare
Before thee, to be tasted, felt and seen
Like what it is, now Florence goes away!

Thou livest now, with men art man again!

Those Florentines were eyes to thee of old;

But Braccio, but Domizia, gone is each—

There lie beneath thee thine own multitudes—

Sawest thou?

Lur. I saw.

Hus. Then, hold thy course, my King!

The years return. Let thy heart have its way!

Ah, they would play with thee as with all else?

Turn thee to use, and fashion thee anew,

Find out God's fault in thee as in the rest?

Oh, watch, but listen only to these men

Once at their occupation! Ere ye know,

The free great heaven is shut, their stifling pall

Drops till it frets the very tingling hair—

So weighs it on our head, and, for the earth,

Our common earth is tethered up and down,

Over and across—here shalt thou move, they say!

Lur. Ay, Husain?

Hus. So have they spoiled all beside!

So stands a man girt round with Florentines,

Priests, greybeards, Braccios, women, boys and spies,

All in one tale, each singing the same song,

How thou must house, and live at bed and board,

Take pledge and give it, go their every way,

Breathe to their measure, make thy blood beat time

With theirs—or—all is nothing—thou art lost—

A savage . . . how shouldst thou perceive as they?

Feel glad to stand, 'neath God's close naked hand!

Look up to it! Why, down they pull thy neck,

Lest it crush thee, who feel'st it and wouldst kiss,

Without their priests that needs must glove it first,

Less peradventure it should wound thy lip!

Love Woman! Why, a very beast thou art!

Thou must . . .

Lur. Peace, Husain!

Hus. Ay, but, spoiling all, For all, else true, things substituting false,

That they should dare spoil, of all instincts, thine!

Should dare to take thee with thine
 instincts up,
 Thy battle-ardours, like a ball of fire,
 And class them and allow them place
 and play
 So far, no farther—unabashed the
 while !
 Thou with the soul that never can
 take rest—
 Thou born to do, undo, and do again,
 But never to be still,—wouldst thou
 make war ?
 Oh, that is commendable, just and
 right !
 Come over, say they, have the honour
 due
 In living out thy nature ! Fight thy
 best—
 It is to be for Florence not thyself !
 For thee, it were a horror and a
 plague—
 For us, when war is made for Flor-
 ence, see,
 How all is changed—the fire that fed
 on earth
 Now towers to heaven !—
Lur. And what sealed up so long
 My Husain's mouth ?
Hus. Oh, friend, oh, lord—for me,
 What am I?—I was silent at thy
 side,
 That am a part of thee—It is thy
 hand,
 Thy foot that glows when in the heart
 fresh blood
 Boils up, thou heart of me ! Now
 live again !
 Again love as thou likest, hate as free !
 Turn to no Braccios nor Domizias
 now,
 To ask, before thy very limbs dare
 move,
 If Florence' welfare be concerned
 thereby !
Lur. So clear what Florence must
 expect of me !
Hus. Both armies against Flor-
 ence ! Take revenge
 Wide, deep—to live upon, in feeling
 now,—
 And after, in remembrance, year by
 year

And, with the dear conviction, die at
 last !
 She lies now at thy pleasure—pleasure
 have !
 Their vaunted intellect that gilds our
 sense,
 And blends with life, to show it better
 by,
 -- How think'st thou?—I have turned
 that light on them !
 They called our thirst of war a
 transient thing ;
 The battle-element must pass away
 From life, they said, and leave a
 tranquil world :
 —Master, I took their light and
 turned it full
 On that dull turgid vein they said
 would burst
 And pass away ; and as I looked on Life,
 Still everywhere I tracked this, though
 it hid
 And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,
 Changed oft the hue yet ever was the
 same :
 Why, 'twas all fighting, all their
 nobler life !
 All work was fighting, every harm—
 defeat.
 And every joy obtained—a victory !
 Be not their dupe !
 -- Their dupe ? That hour
 is past !
 Here stand'st thou in the glory and
 the calm !
 All is determined ! Silence for me
 now ! *[HUSAIN goes.]*
Lur. Have I heard all ?
Dom. *[Advancing from the back-*
ground.] No, Luria, I am here !
 Not from the motives these have urged
 on thee.
 Ignoble, insufficient, incomplete,
 And pregnant each with sure seeds of
 decay,
 As failing of sustainment from thyself,
 --Neither from low revenge, nor
 selfishness,
 Nor savage lust of power, nor one,
 nor all,
 Shalt thou abolish Florence ! I pro-
 claim

The angel in thee, and reject the
spirits

Which ineffectual crowd about his
strength,

And mingle with his work and claim
a share !

—Inconsciously to the augustest end
Thou hast arisen : second not in rank
So much as time, to him who first
ordained

That Florence, thou art to destroy,
should be—

Vet him a star, too, guided, who
broke first

The pride of lonely power, the life
apart,

And made the eminences, each to
each,

Lean o'er the level world and let it lie
Safe from the thunder henceforth
'neath their arms—

So the few famous men of old com-
bined,

And let the multitude rise underneath,
And reach them, and unite—so Flor-
ence grew !

Braccio speaks well, it was well worth
the price.

But when the sheltered Many grew
in pride

And grudged the station of the glori-
ous ones,

Who, greater than their kind, are
truly great

Only in voluntary servitude—

Time was for thee to rise, and thou
art here.

Such plague possessed this Florence
—who can tell

The mighty girth and greatness at the
heart

Of those so noble pillars of the grove
She pulled down in her envy ? Who
as I,

The light weak parasite born but to
twine

Round each of them and, measuring
them, so live ?

My light love keeps the matchless
circle safe,

My slender life proves what has past
away !

I lived when they departed ; lived to
sing

To thee, the mighty stranger ; thou
shouldst rise

And burst the thralldom, and avenge,
I knew.

I have done nothing ; all was thy
strong heart :

But a bird's weight can break the
infant tree

Which after holds an acry in its
arms,

And 'twas my care that nought should
warp thy spire

From rising to the height ; the roof is
reached—

Break through and there is all the sky
above !

Go on to Florence, Luria ! 'Tis
man's cause !

Fail thou, and thine own fall is least
to dread !

Thou keepest Florence in her evil
way,

Encouragest her sin so much the
more—

And while the bloody past is justified,
Thou all the surelier dost work against

The men to come, the Lurias yet un-
born,

Who, greater than thyself, are reached
o'er thee

That giv'st the vantage-ground their
foes require,

As o'er my prostrate House thyself
was't reached !

Man calls thee—God shall judge thee :
all is said.

The mission of my House fulfilled at
last !

And the mere woman, speaking for
herself,

Reserves speech ; it is now woman's
time. [DOMIZIA goes.

Lur. So at the last must figure
Luria, then !

Doing the various work of all his
friends,

And answering every purpose save his
own.

No doubt, 'tis well for them to wish ;
for him—

After the exploit what is left? Per-
chance

A little pride upon the swarthy brow,
At having brought successfully to bear
'Gainst Florence' self her own especial
arms,—

Her craftiness, impelled by fiercer
strength

From Moorish blood than feeds the
northern wit

But after!—once the easy vengeance
willed,

Beautiful Florence at a word laid low
(Not in her Domes and Towers and
Palaces,

Not even in a dream, that outrage!)
—low.

As shamed in her own eyes henceforth
for ever,

Low, for the rival cities round to see,
Conquered and pardoned by a hireling
Moor!

For him, who did the irreparable
wrong,

What would be left, his life's illusion
fled,

What hope or trust in the forlorn wide
world?

How strange that Florence should
mistake me so!

How grew this? What withdrew her
faith from me?

Some cause! These fretful-blooded
children talk

Against their mother, — they are
wronged, they say—

Notable wrongs a smile makes up
again!

So, taking fire at each supposed
offence,

They may speak rashly, suffer for
rash speech—

But what could it have been in word
or deed

That injured me? Some one word
spoken more

Out of my heart, and all had changed
perhaps!

My fault, it must have been,—for
what gain they?

Why risk the danger? See, what I
could do!

And my fault, wherefore visit upon
them,

My Florentines? The generous re-
venge,

I meditate! To stay here passively,
Go at their summons, be as they
dispose—

Why, if my very soldiers keep their
ranks,

And if I pacify my chiefs, what then?
I ruin Florence—teach her friends

mistrust

Confirm her enemies in harsh belief
And when she finds one day, as she
must find,

The strange mistake, and how my
heart was hers,

Shall it console me, that my Floren-
tines

Walk with a sadder step, a graver face,
Who took me with such frankness,
praised me so,

At the glad outset! Had they loved
me less,

They had less feared what seemed a
change in me.

And after all, who did the harm?
Not they!

How could they interpose with those
old fools

In the council? Suffer for those old
fools' sakes

They, who make pictures of me, sang
the songs

About my battles? Ah, we Moors
get blind

Out of our proper world where we
can see!

The sun that guides is closer to us!
There—

There, my own orb! He sinks from
out the sky!

Why, there! a whole day has he
blessed the land,

My land, our Florence all about the
hills,

The fields and gardens, vineyards,
olive-grounds,

All have been blest—and yet we
Florentines

With minds intent upon our battle
here,

Found that he rose too soon, or else too late,
 Gave us no vantage, or gave Pisa more—
 And so we wronged him ! Does he turn in ire
 To burn the earth, that cannot understand ?
 Or drop out quietly, and leave the sky,
 His task once ended ? Night wipes blame away :
 Another morning from my East shall rise
 And find all eyes at leisure, more disposed
 To watch it and approve its work, no doubt.
 So, praise the new sun, the successor praise !
 Praise the new Luria, and forget the old !
[Taking a phial from his breast.]
 —Strange ! This is all I brought from my own Land
 To help me—Europe would supply the rest,
 All needs beside, all other helps save this !
 I thought of adverse fortune, battles lost,
 The natural upbraidings of the loser,
 And then this quiet remedy to seek
 At end of the disastrous day—
[He drinks.]
 'Tis sought !
 This was my happy triumph-morning :
 Florence
 Is saved : I drink this, and ere night,
 —die !—Strange !

ACT V

NIGHT.

LURIA. PUCCIO.

Lur. I thought to do this, not to talk this : well !
 Such were my projects for the City's good,
 To save her from attack or by defence.

Time, here as elsewhere, soon or late may take
 Our foresight by surprise with chance and change ;
 But not a little we provide against
 —If you see clear on every point.
Puc. Most clear.
Lur. Then all is said— not much, if you count words,
 Yet for an understanding ear enough,
 And all that my brief stay permits, beside.
 Nor must you blame me, as I sought to teach
 My elder in command, or threw a doubt
 Upon the very skill, it comforts me
 To know I leave,—your steady soldier-ship
 That never failed me : yet, because it seemed
 A stranger's eye might haply note defect,
 Which skill, thro' use and custom, overlooks,
 I have gone into the old cares once more,
 As if I had to come and save again
 Florence—that May—that morning !
 'Tis night now—
 Well—I broke off with ? . . .
Puc. Of the past campaign
 You spoke—of measures to be kept in mind
 For future use.
Lur. True, so . . . but, time—no time !
 As well end here : remember this, and me !
 Farewell now !
Puc. Dare I speak ?
Lur. —The south o' the river—
 How is the second stream called . . .
 no,—the third ?
Puc. Pesa.
Lur. And a stone's cast from the fording-place,
 To the East,—the little mount's name ?
Puc. Lupo.
Lur. Ay.
 Ay—there the tower, and all that side is safe !

With San Romano, west of Evola,
San Miniato, Scala, Empoli,
Five towers in all, forget not !

Puc. Fear not me !

Lur. —Nor to memorialise the
Council now,

I' the easy hour, on those battalions'
claim

On the other side, by Staggia on the
hills,

That kept the Siennese at check !

Puc. One word—
Sir, I must speak ! That you submit
yourself

To Florence' bidding, howsoe'er it
prove,

And give up the command to me—is
much,

Too much, perhaps : but what you
tell me now,

Even will affect the other course you
choose —

Poor as it may be, peril even that !
Refuge you seek at Pisa—yet these
plans

All militate for Florence, all conclude
Your formidable work to make her
queen

Of the country,—which her rivals rose
against

When you began it,—which to inter-
rupt,

Pisa would buy you off at any price !
You cannot mean to sue for Pisa's
help,

With this made perfect and on record ?
Lur. I

At Pisa, and for refuge, do you
say ?

Puc. Where are you going, then ?
You must decide

On leaving us, a silent fugitive,
Alone, at night—you, stealing thro'
our lines,

Who were this morning's Luria,—you
escape

To painfully begin the world once
more,

With such a Past, as it had never
been !

Where are you going ?

Lur. Not so far, my Puccio,

But that I hope to hear, and know,
and praise

(If you mind praise from your old
captain yet)

Each happy blow you strike for
Florence !

Puc. —Ay,
But ere you gain your shelter, what
may come ?

For see—tho' nothing's surely known
as yet,

Still . . . truth must out . . . I
apprehend the worst.

If mere suspicion stood for certainty
Before, there's nothing can arrest the
steps

Of Florence toward your ruin, once
on foot.

Forgive her fifty times, it matters
not !

And having disbelieved your inno-
cence,

How can she trust your magnanimity ?
You may do harm to her—why then,
you will !

And Florence is sagacious in pursuit.
Have you a friend to count on ?

Lur. One sure friend.

Puc. Potent ?

Lur. All potent.

Puc. And he is apprised ?

Lur. He waits me.

Puc. So !—Then I, put in your
place,

Making my profit of all done by you,
Calling your labours mine, reaping
their fruit,

To these, the State's gift, now add
this of yours

That I may take to my peculiar store
All your instructions to do Florence
good ;

And if, by putting some few happily
In practice, I should both advantage
her

And draw down honour on myself, —
what then ?

Lur. Do it, my Puccio ! I shall
know and praise !

Puc. Though, so, men say, " mark
what we gain by change
—A Puccio for a Luria ! "

Lur. Even so !
Puc. Then, not for fifty hundred
 Florences,
 Would I accept one office save my
 own,
 Fill any other than my rightful post
 Here at your feet, my Captain and
 my Lord !
 That such a cloud should break, such
 trouble be,
 Ere a man settle soul and body down
 Into his true place and take rest for
 ever !
 Here were my wise eyes fixed on your
 right hand,
 And so the bad thoughts came and the
 worse words,
 And all went wrong and painfully
 enough,—
 No wonder,—till, the right spot
 stumbled on.
 All the jar stops, and there is peace
 at once !
 I am yours now,—a tool your right
 hand wields !
 God's love, that I should live, the
 man I am,
 On orders, warrants, patents and the
 like,
 As if there were no glowing eye i' the
 world.
 To glance straight inspiration to my
 brain,
 No glorious heart to give mine twice
 the beats !
 For, see—my doubt, where is it ?
 Fear ? 'tis flown !
 And Florence and her anger are a
 tale
 To scare a child ! Why, half-a-dozen
 words
 Will tell her, spoken as I now can
 speak,
 Her error, my past folly—and all's
 right,
 And you are Luria, our great chief
 again !
 Or at the worst—which worst were
 best of all—
 To exile or to death I follow you !

Lur. Thanks, Puccio ! Let me use
 the privilege

You grant me : if I still command you,
 stay !
 Remain here—my vicegerent, it shall
 be,
 And not successor : let me, as of old,
 Still serve the State, my spirit prompt-
 ing yours ;
 Still triumph, one for both—There !
 Leave me now !
 You cannot disobey my first command ?
 Remember what I spoke of Jacopo,
 And what you promised to observe
 with him !
 Send him to speak with me—nay, no
 farewell—
 You shall be by me when the sentence
 comes. [*PUCCIO goes.*]
 So, there's one Florentine returns
 again !
 Out of the genial morning company,
 One face is left to take into the night.

Enter JACOPO.

Jac. I wait for your commands, Sir.
Lur. What, so soon ?
 I thank your ready presence and fair
 word.
 I used to notice you in early days
 As of the other species, so to speak,
 Those watchers of the lives of us who
 act—
 That weigh our motives, scrutinise our
 thoughts :
 So, I propound this to your faculty
 As you would tell me, were a town
 to take
 . . . That is, of old. I am departing
 hence
 Under these imputations : that is
 nought—
 I leave no friend on whom they may
 rebound,
 Hardly a name behind me in the land,
 Being a stranger ; all the more behoves
 That I regard how altered were the
 case
 With natives of the country, Floren-
 tines,
 On whom the like mischance should
 fall ; the roots
 O' the tree survive the ruin of the
 trunk—

No root of mine will throb — you understand.

But I had predecessors, Florentines,
Accused as I am now, and punished so—

The Traversari — you know more than I
How stigmatised they are, and lost in shame.

Now Puccio, who succeeds me in command,

Both served them and succeeded, in due time ;

He knows the way, holds proper documents,

And has the power to lay the simple truth

Before an active spirit, as I know yours :

I also there's Tiburzio, my new friend,

— a word, confirms such evidence, being the chivalry's soul we know.

I put it to your inspection — were't not well,

A grace, though but for contrast's sake, no more, —

If you who witness, in my name, have borne a share

Involuntarily, in my mission, Should, of your promotion, set your skill

To indicate — this is to investigate

The reason for the wrong of which befel

Those famous citizens, your countrymen ?

Nay — you shall rise not to reflect,

And if your sense of justice be not for you — good !

Jac. And if, the trial past, their fame stand clear

To all men's eyes, as yours, my lord, to mine —

Their ghosts may sleep in quiet satisfaction !

For me, a straw thrown up into the air,

My testimony goes for a straw's worth. I used to hold by the instructed brain,

And move with Braccio as the master-wind ;

The heart leads surelier : I must move with you —

As greatest now, who ever were the best.

So, let the last and humblest of your servants

Accept your charge, as Braccio's heretofore,

And offer homage, by obeying you !

[*JACOPO goes.*]

Lur. Another ! — Luria goes not poorly forth !

If we could wait ! The only fault's with Time :

All men become good creatures — but so slow !

Enter DOMIZIA.

Lur. Ah, you once more ?

Dom. Domizia, that you knew, Performed her task, and died with it — 'Tis I !

Another woman, you have never known.

Let the Past sleep now.

Lur. I have done with it.

Dom. How inexhaustibly the spirit grows !

One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach

With her whole energies and die content,

So like a wall at the world's end it stood,

With nought beyond to live for, — is it reached ?

Already are new undreamed energies Outgrowing under, and extending further

To a new object ; — there's another world !

See ! I have told the purpose of my life, —

'Tis gained — you are decided, well or ill —

You march on Florence, or submit to her —

My work is done with you, your brow declares :

But — leave you ? More of you seems yet to reach !

I stay for what I just begin to see.

Lur. So that you turn not to the Past !

Dom. You trace
Nothing but ill in it—my selfish impulse,
Which sought its ends and disregarded yours ?

Lur. Speak not against your nature : best, each keep
His own—you, yours—most, now,
when I keep mine,
—At least, fall by it, having too weakly stood.

God's finger marks distinctions, all so fine,

We would confound—the Lesser has its use,

Which, when it apes the Greater, is foregone.

I, born a Moor, lived half a Florentine ;

But, punished properly, can die a Moor.

Beside, there is what makes me understand

Your nature . . . I have seen it—

Dom. One like mine ?

Lur. In my own East . . . if you would stoop and help
My barbarous illustration . . . it sounds ill—

Yet there's no wrong at bottom—rather, praise—

Dom. Well ?

Lur. We have creatures there, which if you saw

The first time, you would doubtless marvel at,

For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength.

And tho' it were a lively moment's shock

Wherein you found the purpose of those tongues

That seemed innocuous in their lambent play,

Yet, once made know such grace required such guard,

Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think,

In the Wisdom which made all things for the best ;

So take them, good with ill, contentedly—

The prominent beauty with the secret sting.

I am glad to have seen you wondrous Florentines,

Yet . . .

Dom. I am here to listen.

Lur. My own East !
How nearer God we were ! He glows above

With scarce an intervention, presses close

And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours !
We feel Him, nor by painful reason know !

The everlasting minute of creation
Is felt there ; Now it is, as it was
Then ;

All changes at His instantaneous will,
Not by the operation of a law
Whose maker is elsewhere at other work !

His soul is still engaged upon his world—

Man's praise can forward it, Man's prayer suspend,

For is not God all-mighty ?—To recast

The world, erase old things and make them new,

What costs it Him ? So, man breathes nobly there !

And inasmuch as Feeling, the East's gift,

Is quick and transient—comes, and lo, is gone—

While Northern Thought is slow and durable,

Oh, what a mission was reserved for me,

Who, born with a perception of the power

And use of the North's thought for us of the East,

Should have stayed there and turned it to account

Giving Thought's character and permanence

To the too-transitory Feelings there
Writing God's messages in mortal words !

Instead of which, I leave my fated
field

For this where such a task is needed
least,

Where all are born consummate in
the art

I just perceive a chance of making
mine,—

And then, deserting thus my early post,
I wonder that the men I come among

Mistake me! There, how all had
understood,

Still brought fresh stuff for me to
stamp and keep,

Fresh instinct to translate them into
law!

Me, who . . .

Dom. Who here the greater
task achieve,

More needful even: who have brought
fresh stuff

For us to mould, interpret and prove
right, —

New feelings fresh from God, which,
could we know

O' the instant, where had been our
need of them?

—Whose life re-teaches us what life
should be,

What faith is, loyalty and simpleness,
All, their revelation taught us so

long since

That, having mere tradition of the
fact,

Truth copied falteringly from copies
faint,

The early traits all dropped away.—
we said

On sight of faith of yours. "so looks
not faith

"We understand, described and
taught before."

But still, the truth was shown; and
tho' at first

It suffer from our haste, yet trace by
trace

Old memories reappear, the likeness
grows,

Our slow Thought does its work, and
all's re-known.

Oh, noble Luria! what you have
decreed

I see not, but no animal revenge,
No brute-like punishment of bad by
worse

It cannot be, the gross and vulgar way
Traced for me by convention and
mistake.

Has gained that calm approving eye
and brow!

Spare Florence after all! Let Luria
trust

To his own soul, and I will trust to
him!

Lur. In time!

Dom. How, Luria?

Lur. It is midnight now —

And they arrive from Florence with
my fate.

Dom. I hear no step . . .

Lur. I feel it, as you say!

Enter HUSAIN.

Hus. The man returned from
Florence!

Lur. As I knew.

Hus. He seeks thee.

Lur. And I only wait for him.
Aught else?

Hus. A movement of the Lucchese
troops

Southward—

Lur. . . . Toward Florence?
Have out instantly . . .

Ah, old use clings! Puccio must care
henceforth!

In—quick—'tis nearly midnight! Bid
him come!

*Enter TIBURZIO, BRACCIO, and
PUCCIO.*

Lur. Tiburzio?—not at Pisa?

Tib. I return
From Florence: I serve Pisa, and

must think

By such procedure I have served her
best.

A people is but the attempt of many
To rise to the completer life of one—

And those who live as models for the
mass

Are singly of more value than they all.
Such man are you, and such a time is
this,

That your sole fate concerns a nation
 more
 Than its apparent welfare ; and to
 prove
 Your rectitude, and duly crown the
 same.
 Imports it far beyond the day's event,
 Its battle's loss or gain—the mass
 remains,
 Keep but the model safe, new men
 will rise
 To study it, and other days to prove
 How great a good was Luria's having
 lived.
 I might go try my fortune as you
 bade,
 And joining Lucca, helped by your
 disgrace,
 Repair our harm—so were to-day's
 work done :
 But where were Luria for our sons to
 see ?
 No, I look farther. I have testi-
 fied
 (Declaring my submission to your
 arms)
 Your full success to Florence, making
 clear
 Your probity, as none else could : I
 spoke—
 And it shone clearly !

Lur. Ah—till Braccio spoke !
Brac. Till Braccio told in just a
 word the whole—
 His old great error, and return to
 knowledge—
 Which told . . . Nay, Luria, I should
 droop the head,
 I, whom shame rests with, yet I dare
 look up,
 Sure of your pardon now I sue for it,
 Knowing you wholly—so let midnight
 end !
 Sunrise will come next ! Still you
 answer not ?
 The shadow of the night is past away :
 Our circling faces here 'mid which it
 rose
 Are all that felt it,—they close round
 you now
 To witness its completest vanishing.
 Speak, Luria ! Here begins your
 true career—
 Look up to it !—All now is possible—
 The glory and the grandeur of each
 dream—
 And every prophecy shall be fulfilled
 Save one . . . (nay, now your word
 must come at last)
 —That you would punish Florence !
Hus. [*Pointing to LURIA's dead
 body.*] That is done !—

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

PART FIRST, BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE POETRY OF
CHIAPPINO'S LIFE: AND PART SECOND, ITS PROSE

PART I

Inside LUITOLFO'S house at Faenza.
CHIAPPINO, EULALIA.

Eu. What is it keeps Luitolfo?
Night's fast falling,
And 'twas scarce sunset . . . had the
Ave-bell
Sounded before he sought the Pro-
vost's House?

I think not: all he had to say would
take

Few minutes, such a very few, to
say!

How do you think, Chiappino? If
our lord

The Provost were less friendly to
your friend

Than everybody here professes him,
I should begin to tremble—should
not you?

Why are you silent when so many
times

I turn and speak to you?

Ch. That's good!

Eu. You laugh?

Ch. Yes. I had fancied nothing
that bears price

In the whole world was left to call
my own,

And, may be, felt a little pride
thereat:

Up to a single man's or woman's
love,

Down to the right in my own flesh and
blood,

There's nothing mine, I fancied,—till
you spoke!

—Counting, you see, as "nothing"
the permission

To study this peculiar lot of mine
In silence: well, go silence with the
rest

Of the world's good! What can I
say, shall serve?

Eu. This,—lest you, even more
than needs, embitter

Our parting: say your wrongs have
cast, for once,

A cloud across your spirit!

Ch. How a cloud?

Eu. No man nor woman loves you,
did you say?

Ch. My God, were't not for thee!

Eu. Ay, God remains,
Even did Men forsake you.

Ch. Oh, not so!

Were't not for God, I mean, what
hope of truth—

Speaking truth, hearing truth, would
stay with Man?

I, now—the homeless, friendless,
penniless,

Proscribed and exiled wretch who
speak to you,

Ought to speak truth, yet could not,
for my death,

(The thing that tempts me most) help
speaking lies

About your friendship, and Luitolfo's
courage.

And all our townstolk's equani-
mity,—

Through sheer incompetence to rid
myself
Of the old miserable lying trick
Caught from the liars I have lived
with,—God,
Did I not turn to thee! it is thy
prompting
I dare to be ashamed of, and thy
counsel
Would die along my coward lip, I
know—

But I do turn to thee! This craven
tongue,
These features which refuse the soul
its way,
Reclaim thou! Give me truth—
truth, power to speak
—And after be sole present to approve
The spoken truth!—or, stay, that
spoken truth,
Who knows but you, too, might
approve?

Eu. Ah, well—

Keep silence, then, Chiappino!

Ch. You would hear,
And shall now,—why the thing we're
pleased to style

My gratitude to you and all your
friends

For service done me, is just gratitude
So much as yours was service—and no
more.

I was born here, so was Luitolfo,—
both

At one time, much with the same
circumstance

Of rank and wealth; and both, up to
this night

Of parting company, have side by
side

Still fared, he in the sunshine—I, the
shadow:

"Why?" asks the world: "Be-
cause," replies the world

To its complacent self, "these play-
fellows.

Who took at church the holy-water
drop

One from the other's finger, and so
forth,—

Were of two moods: Luitolfo was
the proper

Friend-making, everywhere friend-
finding soul,

Fit for the sunshine, so it followed
him:

A happy-tempered bringer of the
best

Out of the worst: who bears with
what's past cure.

And puts so good a face on't—wisely
passive

Where action's fruitless, while he
remedies

In silence what the foolish rail
against;

A man to smooth such natures as
parade

Of opposition must exasperate—

No general gauntlet-gatherer for the
weak

Against the strong, yet over-scrupu-
lous

At lucky junctures; one who won't
forego

The after-battle work of binding
wounds,

Because, forsooth, he'd have to bring
himself

To side with their inflictors for their
leave!"

—Why do you gaze, nor help me to
repeat

What comes so glibly from the
common mouth,

About Luitolfo and his so-styled
friend?

Eu. Because, that friend's sense is
obscured . . .

Ch. I thought

You would be readier with the other
half

Of the world's story,—my half!—
Yet, 'tis true.

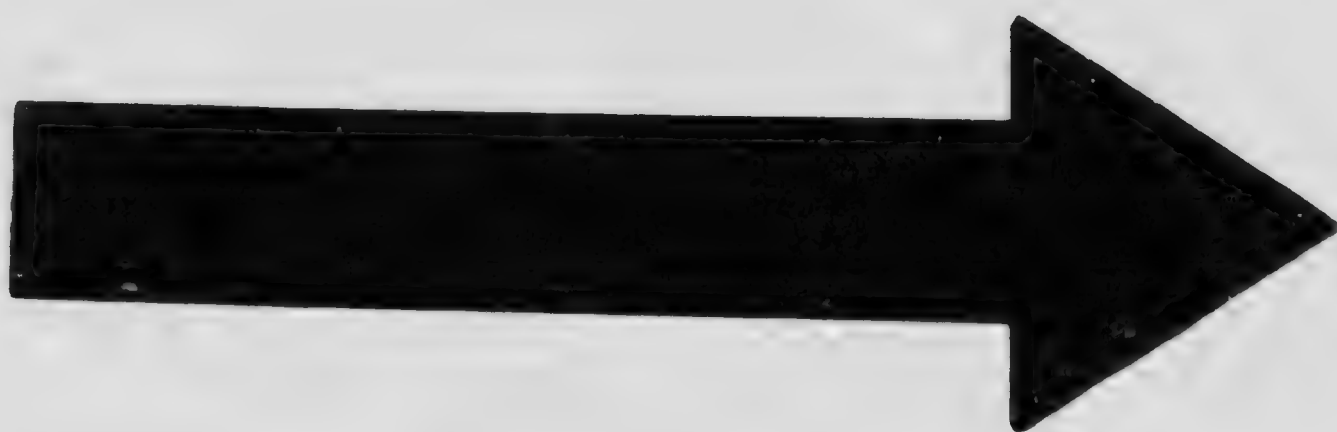
For all the world does say it! Say
your worst!

True, I thank God, I ever said "you
sin,"

When a man did sin: if I could not
say it,

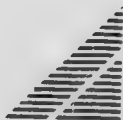
I glared it at him,—if I could not
glare it,

I prayed against him,—then my part
seemed over;



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God's may begin yet—so it will, I trust!

Eu. If the world outraged you, did we?

Ch. What's "me"?

That you use well or ill? It's Man, in me,

All your successes are an outrage to, You all, whom sunshine follows, as you say!

Here's our Faenza birthplace—they send here

A Provost from Ravenna—how he rules,

You can at times be eloquent about—"Then, end his rule!" ah yes, one

stroke does that!

But patience under wrong works slow and sure:

Must violence still bring peace forth? He, beside,

Returns so blandly one's obeisance—ah—

Some latent virtue may be lingering yet,

Some human sympathy which, once excite,

And all the lump were leavened quietly—

So, no more talk of striking, for this time!

But I, as one of those he rules, won't bear

These pretty takings-up and layings down

Our cause, just as you think occasion suits!

Enough of earnest, is there? You'll play, will you?

Diversify your tactics.—give submission.

Obsequiousness and flattery a turn, While we die in our misery patient deaths?

We all are outraged then, and I the first!

I, for Mankind, resent each shrug and smirk,

Each beck and bend, each . . . all you do and are,

I hate!

Eu. We share a common censure, then!

'Tis well you have not poor Luitolfo's part

Or mine to point out in the wide offence.

Ch. Oh, shall I let you so escape me, Lady?

Come, on your own ground, Lady, from yourself,

(Leaving the people's wrong, which most is mine.)

What have I got to be so grateful for? These three last fines, no doubt, one

on the other

Paid by Luitolfo?

Eu. Shame, Chiappino!

Ch. Shame

Fall presently on who deserves it most!

Which is to see. He paid my fines—my friend,

Your prosperous smooth husband presently,

Then, scarce your wooer, —now, your lover: well—

I loved you!

Eu. Hold!

Ch. You knew it, years ago;

When my voice faltered and my eyes grew dim

Because you gave me your silk mask to hold—

My voice that greatens when there's need to curse

The people's Provost to their heart's content,

—My eyes, the Provost, who bears all men's eyes,

Banishes now because he cannot bear!

You knew . . . but you do your parts—my part, I!

So be it! you flourish—I decay! All's well!

Eu. I hear this for the first time!

Ch. The fault's there?

Then, my days spoke not, and my nights of fire

Were voiceless? Then, the very heart may burst

Yet all prove nought, because no mincing speech

Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus?

Eulalia—truce with toying for this
once—
A banished fool, who iblees you to-
night
For the last time—Oh, what's to fear
from me?
You knew I loved you!
Eu. Not so, on my faith!
You were my now-affianced lover's
friend—
Came in, went out with him, could
speak as he;
All praise your ready parts and preg-
nant wit;
See how your words come from you
in a crowd!
Luitolfo's first to place you o'er himself
In all that challenges respect and
love—
Yet you were silent then, who blame
me now!
I say all this by fascination, sure—
I am all but wed to one I love, yet
listen
It must be, you are wronged, and
that the wrongs
Luitolfo pities . . .
Ch. —You too pity? Do!
But hear first what my wrongs are;
so began
This talk and so shall end this talk. I
say,
Was't not enough that I must strive,
I saw,
To grow so far familiar with your
charms
As to contrive some way to win them
—which
To do, an age seemed far too little
for, see!
We all aspire to Heaven—and there
is Heaven
Above us—go there! Dare we go?
no, surely!
How dare we go without a reverent
pause,
A growing less unfit for Heaven?
Even so,
I dared not speak—the greater fool,
it seems!
Was't not enough to struggle with
such folly,

But I must have, beside, the very
man
Whose slight, free, loose and incapa-
cious soul
Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er
he would
—Must have him load me with his
benefits
For fortune's fiercest stroke!
Eu. Justice to him
That's now entreating, at his risk
perhaps,
Justice for you! Did he once call
those acts
Of simple friendship—bounties, bene-
fits?
Ch. No—the straight course had
been to call them so—
Then, I had flung them back, and
kept myself
Unhampered, free as he to win the
prize
We both sought—but “the gold was
dross,” he said.
“He loved me, and I loved him not
—to spurn
“A trifle out of superfluity:
“He had forgotten he had done as
much!”
So had not I!—Henceforth, try as I
could
To take him at his word, there stood
by you
My benefactor—who might speak and
laugh
And urge his nothings—even banter
me
Before you—but my tongue was tied.
A dream!
Let's wake: your husband . . . how
you shake at that!
Good—my revenge!
Eu. Why should I shake?
What forced,
Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?
Ch. There's my revenge, that
nothing forces you!
No gratitude, no liking of the eye,
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor
bond
Of habit—here so many times he
came,

So much he spoke,—all these com-
 pose the tie
 That pulls you from me ! Well, he
 paid my fines,
 Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe,
 dish from table
 —He spoke a good word to the Pro-
 vost here
 Held me up when my fortunes fell
 away
 —It had not looked so well to let me
 drop
 Men take pains to preserve a tree
 stump, even,
 Whose boughs they played beneath—
 much more a friend !
 But one grows tired of seeing, after
 the first,
 Pains spent upon impracticable stuff
 Like me : I could not change— you
 know the rest.
 I've spoke my mind too fully out, for
 once,
 This morning to our Provost ; so ere
 night
 I leave the city on pain of death— and
 now
 On my account there's gallant inter-
 cession
 Goes forward—that's so graceful !—
 and anon
 He'll noisily come back : the inter-
 cession
 Was made and fails—all's over for us
 both
 'Tis vain contending—I had better
 go :
 And I do go—and so to you he turns
 Light of a load, and ease of that
 permits
 His visage to repair its natural bland
 (Economy, sore broken late to suit
 My discontent : so, all are pleased—
 you, with him,
 He with himself, and all of you with
 me
 Who, say the citizens, had done
 far better
 In letting people sleep upon their
 woes.
 If not possessed with talent to relieve
 them

When once they woke ;—but then I
 had, they'll say,
 Doubtless some unknown compensat-
 ing pride
 In what I did—and as I seem content
 With ruining myself, why so should
 they be,
 And so they are, and so be with his
 prize
 The devil, when he gets them speedily !
 Why does not your Luitolfo come ?
 I long
 To don this cloak and take the Lugo
 path.
 It seems you never loved me, then ?
Eu. Chiappino !
Ch. Never ?
Eu. Never.
Ch. That's sad—say
 what I might,
 There was no helping being sure this
 while
 You loved me—love like mine must
 have return,
 I thought—no river starts but to
 some sea !
 And had you loved me, I could soon
 devise
 Some specious reason why you stifled
 love,
 Some fancied self-denial on your part,
 Which made you choose Luitolfo ;
 so, excepting
 From the wide condemnation of all
 here,
 One woman ! Well, the other dream
 may break !
 If I knew any heart, as mine loved
 you,
 Loved me, tho' in the vilest breast
 'twere lodged,
 I should, I think, be forced to love
 again—
 Else there's no right nor reason in
 the world !
Eu. "If you knew," say you,—but
 I did not know—
 That's where you're blind, Chiap-
 pino !—a disease
 Which if I may remove, I'll not repent
 The listening to : you cannot, will
 not, see

How, place you but in every circumstance

Of us, you are just now indignant at,
You'd be as we.

Ch. I should be? . . . that,
again!

I, to my Friend, my Country and my
Love,
Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?

Eu. As we.

Ch. Now, I'll say something
to remember!

I trust in Nature for the stable laws
Of Beauty and Utility—Spring shall
plant,

And Autumn garner to the end of time:
I trust in God—the Right shall be
the Right

And other than the Wrong, while He
endures

I trust in my own soul, that can per-
ceive

The outward and the inward, nature's
good

And God's—So—seeing these men
and myself,

Having a right to speak, thus do I
speak:

I'll not curse . . . God bears with
them—well may I—

But I—protest against their claiming
me!

I simply say, if that's allowable,
I would not . . . broadly . . . do
as they have done—

—God curse this townful of born
slaves, bred slaves,

Branded into the blood and bone,
slaves! Curse

Whoever loved, above his liberty,
House, land or life! and . . .

[*A knocking without.*

. . . Bless my hero-friend,

Luitolfo!

Eu. How he knocks!

Ch. The peril, Lady!

"Chiappino, I have run a risk! My
God!

"How when I prayed the Provost—
(he's my friend)—

"To grant you a week's respite of his
sentence

"That confiscates your goods, and
exiles you,

"He shrugged his shoulder . . . I
say, shrugged it! Yes,

"And fright of that drove all else
from my head.

"Here's a good purse of *saudi*—off
with you!

"Lest of that shrug come—what God
only knows!

"The *saudi*—friend, they're trash
no thanks, I beg—

"Take the North gate, —for San
Vitale's suburb

"Whose double taxes you appealed
against,

"In discomposure at your ill-success

"Is apt to stone you: there, there
only go!

"Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily—

"Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so
you squeeze my wrist!"

—Is it not thus you'll speak, adven-
turous friend?

[*As he opens the door, LUITOLFO
rushes in, his garments dis-
ordered.*

Eu. Luitolfo! Blood?

Luit. There's more—and
more of it!

Eulalia—take the garment . . . no
. . . you, friend!

You take it and the blood from me—
you dare!

Eu. Oh, who has hurt you? where's
the wound?

Ch. "Who," say you?
The man with many a touch of virtue
yet!

The Provost's friend has proved too
frank of speech

And this comes of it. Miserable
hound!

This comes of temporising, as I
said!

Here's fruit of your smooth speeches
and fair looks!

Now see my way! As God lives, I
go straight

To the palace and do justice, once for
all!

Luit. What says he?

- Ch.* I'll do justice on him !
Luit. Him ?
Ch. The Provost.
Luit. I've just killed him !
Eu. Oh, my God !
Luit. My friend, they're on my trace—they'll have me—now !
 They're round him, busy with him : soon they'll find
 He's past their help, and then they'll be on me !
 Chiappino ! save Eulalia . . . I forget . . .
 Were you not bound . . . for . . .
Ch. Lugo !
Luit. Ah—yes—yes—
 That was the point I prayed of him to change.
 Well—go—be happy . . . is Eulalia safe ?
 They're on me !
Ch. 'Tis through me they reach you, then !
 Friend, seem the man you are ! Lock arms—that's right.
 Now tell me what you've done ; explain how you
 That still professed forbearance, still preached peace.
 Could bring yourself . . .
Luit. What was peace for, Chiappino ?
 I tried peace—did that say that when peace failed
 Strife should not follow ? All my peaceful days
 Were just the prelude to a day like this.
 I cried, " You call me ' friend ' save my true friend !
 " Save him, or lose me ! "
Ch. But you never said
 You meant to tell the Provost thus and thus !
Luit. Why should I say it ? What else did I mean ?
Ch. Well ? He persisted ?
Luit. . . . Would so order it
 You should not trouble him too soon again—
 I saw a meaning in his eye and lip—
- I poured my heart's store of indignant words
 Out on him—then— I know not.—He retorted—
 And I . . . some staff lay there to hand—I think
 He bade his servants thrust me out—
 I struck . . .
 . . . Ah, they come ! Fly you, save yourselves, you two !
 The dead back-weight of the beheading axe !
 The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge !
Eu. They do come ! Torches in the Place ! Farewell—
 Chiappino ! You can work no good to us—
 Much to yourself ; believe not, all the world
 Must needs be cursed henceforth !
Ch. And you ?
Eu. I stay.
Ch. Ha, ha ! Now, listen ! I am master here !
 This was my coarse disguise—this paper shows
 My path of flight and place of refuge—see—
 Lugo—Argenta—past San Nicolo—Ferrara, then to Venice and all's safe !
 Put on the cloak ! His people have to fetch
 A compass round about.—There's time enough
 Ere they can reach us—so you straightway make
 For Lugo . . . Nay, he hears not !
 On with it
 The cloak, Luitolfo, do you hear me ?
 See—
 He obeys he knows not how. Then, if I must . . .
 Answer me ! Do you know the Lugo gate ?
Eu. The north-west gate, over the bridge !
Luit. I know !
Ch. Well, there—you are not frightened ? All my route
 Is traced in that—at Venice you'll escape

Their power ! Eulalia—I am master here !

[*Shouts from without. He pushes out LUITOLFO, who complies mechanically.*]

In time I may, help me with him—So !
—he's gone.

Eu. What have you done ? On you, perchance, all know
The Provost's hater, will men's vengeance fall

As our accomplice . . .

Ch. Mere accomplice ? See !

[*Putting on LUITOLFO's vest.*]
Now, Lady, am I true to my profession,

Or one of these ?

Eu. You take Luitolfo's place ?

Ch. Die for him !

Eu. Well done !

[*Shouts increase.*]

Ch. How the people tarry !

I can't be silent . . . I must speak
. . . or sing—

How natural to sing now !

Eu. Hush and pray !

We are to die—but even I perceive
'Tis not a very hard thing so to die—
My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,
Poor Cesca, suffers more from one
day's life

With the stern husband ; Tisbe's
heart goes forth

Each evening after that wild son of
hers,

To track his thoughtless footstep thro'
the streets—

How easy for them both to die like
this !

I am not sure that I could live as they.

Ch. Here they come, crowds !

They pass the gate ? Yes !—

No !—

One torch is in the courtyard. Here
flock all !

Eu. At least Luitolfo has escaped !

—What cries !

Ch. If they would drag one to the
market-place,

One might speak there !

Eu.

List, list !

Ch. They mount the steps !

Enter the Populace.

Ch. I killed the Provost !

[*The Populace, speaking together.*]

'Twas Chiappino, friends !

Our saviour.—The best man at last as
first !

He who first made us see what chains
we wore,

He also strikes the blow that shatters
them,

He at last saves us—our best citizen !

Oh, have you only courage to speak
now ?

My eldest son was christened a year
since

“Cino” to keep Chiappino's name in
mind—

Cino, for shortness merely, you ob-
serve !

The City's in our hands.—The guards
are fled—

Do you, the cause of all, come down
—come down—

Come forth to counsel us, our chief,
our king,

Whate'er rewards you ! Choose your
own reward !

The peril over, its reward begins !

Come and harangue us in the market-
place !

Eu. Chiappino !

Ch. Yes . . . I understand
your eyes !

You think I should have promptlier
disowned

This deed with its strange unforeseen
success

In favour of Luitolfo—but the peril,
So far from ended, hardly seems begun !

To-morrow, rather, when a calm
succeeds,

We easily shall make him full amends :
And meantime . . . if we save them

as they pray,
And justify the deed by its effects ?

Eu. You would, for worlds, you
had denied at once !

Ch. I know my own intention, be
assured !

All's well ! Precede us, fellow-
citizens !

PART II

The Market-place. LUITOLFO in disguise mingling with the Populace assembled opposite the Provost's Palace.

1st By-stander [To LUIT.] You, a friend of Luitolfo's! Then, your friend is vanished, in all probability killed on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our illustrious fellow-citizen, thrice-noble saviour, and new Provost that is like to be, this very morning, Chiappino!

Luit. *He* the new Provost?

2nd. Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder pillar stand, while Ogniben, the Pope's Legate from Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people, according to established usage.—For which reason, there is the assemblage you inquire about.

Luit. Chiappino—the old Provost's successor? Impossible! But tell me of that presently—What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memorable night?

3rd. You were Luitolfo's friend? So was I—Never, if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milksop! He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: so when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow,—this Luitolfo, not unreasonably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately: he may have got trodden to death in the press at the south-east gate, when the Provost's guards fled thro' it to Ravenna, with their wounded master.—if he did not rather hang himself under some hedge.

Luit. Or why not simply have lain perdue in some quiet corner,—such as San Cassiano, where his estate was,—receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here . . . how, for instance, the Provost was not dead after all, only wounded . . . or, as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chiappino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost . . . and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favourable opportunity for returning—might it not have been so?

3rd. Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock.—I'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treader on tiptoes with finger on lip,

how he met his death in the great plague-year: *dico vobis!* Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was infected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger.—And so did he begin—but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say, —thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent,—consequently at the fatal seventeen he inhaled with a vigour and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone—Ha, ha!

Luit. [*Aside.*] (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude!

3rd. Why, he had a house here, and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his friend and heir . . .

Luit. Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry—I know Chiappino better!

1st. (Our friend has the bile! after all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities—.) Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Faenza since that memorable night?

Luit. It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him with proposing to accept.

1st. Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable—up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children—out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant—we were to defy the world: but, next grey morning, "What will Rome say," began everybody—(you know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome). And quietly into the town, by the Ravenna road, comes on muleback a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate—trots briskly thro' the streets humming a "*Cur fremuère gentes*," and makes directly for the Provost's Palace—there it faces you—"One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!" (laughing gently to himself) —"Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar—So! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your wounded Provost—and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method; 'tis I come, and not another, from a certain love I confess to, of composing differences. So, do you understand, you are about to experience this un-

heard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile,—I insist on your simply pleasing yourselves,—and now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a Justice anterior to all institutions,—and so will you carry matters, that the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place,—once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him—and this so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him so late that evening—I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next."—And thus he ran on, easily and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at the praise of Law, Order and Paternal Government by somebody from rather a distance: all our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again . . .

Luit. Do you see?—I recognise him there!

3rd. Ay, but mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure Republic. "And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?"—returns the Legate—thereupon speaking, for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate government by the Best and Wisest—and it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory. place but each in its proper light—

"Oh, are you there?" quoth Chiappino:—"In that, I agree," returns Chiappino, and soon.

Luit. But did Chiappino cede at once to this?

1st. Why, not altogether at once—for instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way,—whereas what right, asked he, has any man to wish to be superior to another?—whereat, "Ah, Sir," answers the Legate, "this is the death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers—this—that your right-hand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow left-hand—yourself set about attacking yourself—for see now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble nature of the soul, its divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to that same inherent nobility, that are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of Life,—and when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left-hand gets the blow: one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite as good, of the same,—you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows,—all that you so disclaim,—but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it,—only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superior to your fellows after their poor fashion—to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope,

with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while—but neither does our gaping friend, the Burgess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in understanding better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under the tongue this sweeter morsel still, the feeling that, thro' immense philosophy, he does *not* feel, he rather thinks, above you and me!"—And so chatting, they glided off arm in arm.

Luit. And the result is . . .

1st. Why, that a month having gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love—at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's goods,—becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the Provostship—which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear the way! He will follow presently!

Luit. [*Withdrawing a little*]. I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than ever—yet she surely said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger,—wherefore, disregarding her injunctions to continue in my retreat and wait the result of, what she called, some experiment yet in process—I hastened here without her leave or knowledge—what could I else?—Yet if what they say be true . . . if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them—and at the word, see!

Enter CHIAPPINO and EULALIA.

Eu. We part here, then? The change in your principles would seem to be complete!

Ch. Now, why refuse to see that in my present course I change no principles, only re-adapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of what you may call the material instrumentality of Life; of ever being able to

rightly operate on mankind thro' such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government— but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted institutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection to the soul I am about to bestow on them . . . do you see? Why should one desire to invent, so long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organisation shall be extinct, then, I grant you, it will be time to try and create another.

Eu. And there being discoverable some hope yet in the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavouring to realise those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

Ch. Say, I would fain realise my conception of a Palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly; here, in the market-place is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to lay, or a labourer to help me,—stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances suddenly offer me . . . turn and see it . . . the old Provost's House to experiment upon—ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now—but materials abound, a crowd of workmen offer their services: here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there, a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough; and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content—ought I not rather make the best of such an opportunity, than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? But you cannot understand this nor me: it is better we should part as you desire.

Eu. So the love breaks away too!

Ch. No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens—needs more than one object to content it, and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love in what is only a single part, nor in finding the so many and so various loves, united in the love of a woman,—finding all uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. I shall give the intellectual part of my love to Men, the mighty dead, or illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

Eu. Nay, I only think, what do I lose! and, one more word— which shall complete my instruction— does Friendship go too?— What of Luitolfo—the author of your present prosperity?

Ch. How the author?—

Eu. That blow now called yours . . .

Ch. Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation—and to which all my thoughts and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not. He would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine—a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away—a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

Eu. So we profess, so we perform!

Enter OGNIBEN. EULALIA stands apart.

Ogni. I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!—By your leave, Sir! Perform? What does the lady say of Performing?

Ch. Only the trite saying, that we must not trust Profession, only Performance.

Ogni. She'll not say that, Sir, when she knows you longer; you'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men by their professions! For tho' the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moments' extravagant goodness, why, trust it and know the man by it, I say—not by his performance—which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must with its accidents and circumstances,—the profession was purely the man's own! I judge people by what they might be, —not are, nor will be.

Ch. But have there not been found, too, performing natures, not merely promising?

Ogni. Plenty: little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, "I will repay you!"—for a favour done him: so when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him; gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. "Good," say you—and it is good: but had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before—on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty cousin Lisa—instead of being the beggar he then was,—I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the wine-kegs, and all the money, and all the land, and only reserved to himself some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but the world interfered!—To our business—did I understand you just now within-doors? You are not going to marry your old friend's love, after all?

Ch. I must have a woman that can sympathise with, and appreciate me, I told you.

Ogni. Oh, I remember! you, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one (—avowedly lesser—contest with you on that score would never do!)—such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward: why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but greater considerably! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather?—on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please? So God serves us!

Ch. And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal alike the strength and the weakness—

Ogni. Ah, my friend, wish for nothing so foolish! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see; be to her like the Western Lands (they bring us such strange news of) to the Spanish Court—send her only your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds, and fruits and gems—so shall you, what is unseen of you, be supposed altogether a Paradise by her,—as these Western lands by Spain—tho' I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally? Offer her your mouth to kiss—don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips! You understand my humour by this time? I help men to carry out their own principle: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, if they will but go on and say, four and four make ten!

Ch. But these are my private affairs—what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the people hear that I am appointed Provost, tho' you and I may thoroughly discern

and easily, too—the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged . . . and heretofore by myself . . . incompatible with its existence . . . when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one . . .

Q. ui. Why, you must deal with people broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say,—new truths, old truths! why, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world—we know all we shall ever know, and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we *do* know this and the other matter, that men get called prophets, poets and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others—and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time. As for adding to the original stock of truths,—impossible!—So you see the expression of them is the grand business:—you have got a truth in your head about the right way of governing people, and you took a mode of expressing it—which now you confess to be imperfect—but what then? There is Truth in Falsehood, Falsehood in Truth.—No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally unconscious ones: and as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to conjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was,—do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see a flying horse there as he says,—so, thro' the

contradictory expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and try to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable!—"Contradictions?"—Of course there were, say you!

C. %. Still, the world at large may call it inconsistency, and what shall I say in reply?

Q. ui. Why look you, when they tell you with tergiversation or duplicity, you may answer—you begin to perceive that, when all's done and said, both great parties in the state, the advocates of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and anti-patriot, are found working together for the common good, and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances—to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spent their life in pushing it onward as those who gave theirs to the business of pulling it back—now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you—but it steadily advances, you rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, "Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle; I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving"—even he seems graceful in his avowal, when one considers that he might say, "I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, and from which he saves me—I thank the antagonist equally!" Moreover, you must enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience.

C. %. And naturally time must wear off such asperities—the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other, common sympathies—do they not?

Qm. Ay, had the young David but vte first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered an abundance of such common sympathies—He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man, they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other; but, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate his cheeses alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eyesight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side—and when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathise with every form of intelligence, and see the good in it, however limited—I answer, so I do—but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however finelier or widelier I may extend its action. I desire to be able, with a quickened eyesight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only,—but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts . . . else they only dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has His Archangels and consorts with them—tho' He made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and so ought to speak—I do justice to your own principles, that is all!

Ch. But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics: what more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the newly

emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favour, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from.—Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there is a confederacy immediately, from which—exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to you!

Qm. And a journey over the sea to you!—That is the generous way. Say—emancipated slaves, the first excess, and off I go! The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so begins pettishly, while he rubs his soles, "Woe be to whoever brings anything in the shape of a stick this way,"—you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with,—you, go away to everybody's sorrow! Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as "Let no man indulge in owning a stick which is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require." Well—there are pre-ordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether—yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly—for, do you know what is to . . . all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you Men of Genius? It is this—that, while you generally began by pulling down God, and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own Genius in His place,—still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably—would one think it?—that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves.—That will be a point in the favour of all such, I hope and believe!

Ch. Why, men of genius are usually charged, I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of superior rank!

Ogni. Not I! (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with a weapon to brandish, a man is the more formidable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully.—We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use is a mysterious divining rod that may serve you in undreamed-of ways.—Beauty, Strength, Intellect—men often have none of these and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the possessor.—You know at least what it is you make up your mind to forego, and so can apply the fittest substitute in your power; wanting Beauty, you cultivate Good Humour, missing Wit, you get Riches; but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural Lord of the best of us—a Duke, he is now! there indeed is a Virtue to be revered!

Ch. Ay, by the vulgar—not by Messere Stiatta the poet, who pays more assiduous court to him than anybody.

Ogni. What else should Stiatta pay court to? He has talent, not honour and riches—men naturally covet what they have not.

Ch. No—or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches, of which he has plenty already.

Ogni. Because a purse added to a purse makes the holder twice as rich

but just such another talent as Stiatta's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with! But lo, how we keep the good people waiting. I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you, and which you are too modest to duly enforce. Come, to our main business: shall we ascend the steps? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people; they know your antecedents, and will accept you with a joyful unanimity: whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up! you are nerving yourself to an effort? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatta we were talking of—who determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen, - heard too plainly "hiss, hiss, hiss," increase every moment, till at last the man fell senseless—not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve!

Ch. Do you begin to throw off the mask? to jest with me, having got me effectually into your trap?

Ogni. Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part—you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome's authority in my person—and I shall authorise no more than the simple re-establishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself—the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

Ch. And that stipulation?

Ogni. Oh, the obvious one—that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost . . .

Ch. Ha!

Ogni. Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of course; what did you expect?

Ch. Who heard of this?

Ogni. Rather, who needed to hear of this?

Ch. Can it be, the popular rumour never reached you . . .

Ogni. Many more such rumours reach me, friend, than I choose to receive: those which wait longest have best chance--has the present one sufficiently waited? Now is its time for entry with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace-steps--which we may not have to ascend after all!--my good friends--(nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose)--who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost?--his successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt, bare justice we all anticipate? Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know?

Luitolfo [*coming forward*]. I!

All. Luitolfo!

Luit. I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility. --Having taken thought, I am grown stronger--I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me. Nay, Chiappino--we are friends still--I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seems at first. So, they tell me, my horse is of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due patience.

Eu. I was determined to justify my choice, Chiappino; to let Luitolfo's nature vindicate itself. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

Ogni. Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought 'o perfect, on the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth,

take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo!--Still silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign, however! And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand--it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot, and shock us all, but you will live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you will get better as you get older! All men do so,--they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its Beauty and Grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid, when they leave us. The sweetest child we all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it--would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he has grown six feet high, black and bearded: but, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world, puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion,--and when the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life,--hoping nobody may murder him,--he who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him,--why, I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder! And now --(Ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the Northwest gate--going to Lugo again? Good-bye!)--And now give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's Palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home. I have known Four-and-twenty leaders of revolts!--

CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY

A POEM

CHRISTMAS-EVE

I

OUT of the little chapel I burst
Into the fresh night air again.
I had waited a good five minutes first
In the doorway, to escape the rain
That drove in gusts down the common's centre
At the edge of which the chapel stands,
Before I plucked up heart to enter :
Heaven knows how many sorts of hands
Reached past me, groping for the latch
Of the inner door that hung on catch.
More obstinate the more they fumbled,
Till, giving way at last with a scold
Of the crazy hinge, in squeezed or tumbled
One sheep more to the rest in fold,
And left me irresolute, standing sentry
In the sheepfold's lath-and-plaster entry,
Four feet long by two feet wide,
Partitioned off from the vast inside—
I blocked up half of it at least.
No remedy ; the rain kept driving :
They eyed me much as some wild beast,
That congregation, still arriving,
Some of them by the mainroad, white
A long way past me into the night,
Skirting the common, then diverging :
Not a few suddenly emerging
From the common's self thro' the paling-gaps,—
—They house in the gravel-pits perhaps,

Where the road stops short with its
safeguard border
Of lamps, as tired of such disorder ;—
But the most turned in yet more
abruptly
From a certain squalid knot of
alleys,
Where the town's bad blood once
slept corruptly,
Which now the little chapel rallies
And leads into day again,—its priest-
liness
Lending itself to hide their beastli-
ness
So cleverly (thanks in part to the
mason),
And putting so cheery a whitewashed
face on
Those neophytes too much in lack of
it,
That, where you cross the common
as I did,
And meet the party thus presided,
" Mount Zion," with Love-lane at the
back of it
They front you as little disconcerted,
As, bound for the hills, her fate
averted
And her wicked people made to mind
him.
Lot might have marched with Gomor-
rah behind him.

II

Well, from the road, the lanes or the
common,
In came the flock : the fat weary
woman,

Panting and bewildered, down-clapping

Her umbrella with a mighty report,
Grounded it by me, wry and flapping,
A wreck of whalebones; then, with a snort,

Like a startled horse, at the interloper
Who humbly knew himself improper,
But could not shrink up small enough,
Round to the door, and in,—the gruff
Hinge's invariable scold
Making your very blood run cold.

Prompt in the wake of her, up-pattered

On broken clogs, the many-tattered
Little old-faced, peaking sister-turned-mother

Of the sickly babe she tried to smother
Somehow up, with its spotted face,
From the cold, on her breast, the one
warm place;

She too must stop, wing the poor
suds dry

Of a draggled shawl, and add thereby
Her tribute to the door-mat, sopping
Already from my own clothes' dropping,

Which yet she seemed to grudge I
should stand on;

Then stooping down to take off her
pattens,

She bore them defiantly, in each hand
one,

Planted together before her breast
And its babe, as good as a lance in
rest.

Close on her heels, the dingy satins
Of a female something, past me flitted,
With lips as much too white, as a
streak

Lay far too red on each hollow cheek:
And it seemed the very door-hinge
pried

I that was left of a woman once,
Holding at least its tongue for the
nonce.

Then a tall yellow man, like the
Penitent Thief,

With his jaw bound up in a handker-
chief.

And eyelids screwed together tight,
Led himself in by some inner light.

And, except from him, from each
that entered,

I had the same interrogation—

"What, you, the alien, you have
ventured

"To take with us, elect, your station?
"A carer for none of it, a Gallio?"

Thus, plain as print, I read the glance
At a common prey, in each counte-
nance,

As of huntsman giving his hounds the
tally-ho:

And, when the door's cry drowned
their wonder,

The draught, it always sent in shutting,
Made the flame of the single tallow
candle

In the cracked square lanthorn I
stood under,

Shoot its blue lip at me, rebutting,
As it were, the luckless cause of
scandal:

I verily thought the zealous light
(In the chapel's secret, too!) for spite,
Would shudder itself clean off the wick,
With the airs of a St. John's Candle-
stick.

There was no standing it much longer.

"Good folks," said I, as resolve grew
stronger,

"This way you perform the Grand-
Inquisitor,

"When the weather sends you a
chance visitor?

"You are the men, and wisdom shall
die with you,

"And none of the old Seven Churches
vie with you!

"But still, despite the pretty perfection

"To which you carry your trick of
exclusiveness,

"And, taking God's word under wise
protection,

"Correct its tendency to diffusiveness.

"Bidding one reach it over hot
ploughshares,—

"Still, as I say, though you've found
salvation,

"If I should choose to cry—as now—
'Shares!'

"See if the best of you bars me my
ration!

"Because I prefer for my expounder
 "Of the laws of the feast, the feast's
 own Founder :
 "Mine's the same right with your
 poorest and sickliest,
 "Supposing I don the marriage-vesti-
 ment ;
 "So, shut your mouth, and open your
 Testament,
 "And carve me my portion at your
 quickest !"
 Accordingly, as a shoemaker's lad
 With wizened face in want of soap,
 And wet apron wound round his
 waist like a rope,
 After stopping outside, for his cough
 was bad,
 To get the fit over, poor gentle
 creature,
 And so avoid disturbing the preacher,
 Passed in, I sent my elbow spikewise
 At the shutting door, and entered
 likewise. —
 Received the hinge's accustomed
 greeting,
 Crossed the threshold's magic pen-
 tacle,
 And found myself in full conventicle,
 -To wit, in Zion Chapel Meeting.
 On the Christmas-Eve of 'Forty-nine,
 Which, calling its flock to their
 special clover,
 Found them assembled and one sheep
 over,
 Whose lot, as the weather pleased,
 was mine.

III

I very soon had enough of it.
 The hot smell and the human noises,
 And my neighbour's coat, the greasy
 cuff of it,
 Were a pebble-stone that a child's
 hand poises,
 Compared with the pig-of-lead-like
 pressure
 Of the preaching-man's immense
 stupidity,
 As he poured his doctrine forth, full
 measure,
 To meet his audience's avidity.

You needed not the wit of the Sibyl
 To guess the cause of it all, in a
 twinkling—
 No sooner had our friend an inkling
 Of treasure hid in the Holy Bible,
 Whenever it was the thought first
 struck him
 How Death, at unawares, might duck
 him
 Deeper than the grave, and quench
 The gin-shop's light in Hell's grim
 drench),
 Than he handled it so, in fine irrever-
 ence,
 As to hug the Book of books to
 pieces :
 And, a patchwork of chapters and
 texts in severance,
 Not improved by the private dog's-
 ears and creases,
 Having clothed his own soul with,
 he'd fain see equipt yours,—
 So tossed you again your Holy Scrip-
 tures,
 And you picked them up, in a sense,
 no doubt :
 Nay, had but a single face of my
 neighbours
 Appeared to suspect that the preacher's
 labours
 Were help which the world could be
 saved without,
 'Tis odds but I had borne in quiet
 A qualm or two at my spiritual diet ;
 Or, who can tell ? had even mustered
 Somewhat to urge in behalf of the
 sermon :
 But the flock sate on, divinely
 flustered,
 Sniffing, methought, its dew of
 Hermon
 With such content in every snuffle,
 As the devil inside us loves to ruffle.
 My old fat woman purred with pleasure,
 And thumb round thumb went twirl-
 ing faster,
 While she, to his periods keeping
 measure,
 Maternally devoured the pastor.
 The man with the handkerchief un-
 tied it,
 Showed us a horrible wen inside it,

Gave his eyelids yet another screw-
ing,
And rocked himself as the woman
was doing.
The shoemaker's lad discreetly chok-
ing,
Kept down his cough. 'Twas too
provoking !
My gorge rose at the nonsense and
stuff of it,
And saying, like Eve when she
plucked the apple,
"I wanted a taste, and now there's
enough of it,"
I flung out of the little chapel.

IV

There was a lull in the rain, a lull
In the wind too ; the moon was risen,
And would have shone out pure and
full,
But for the ramparted cloud-prison,
Block on block built up in the west,
For what purpose the wind knows
best,
Who changes his mind continually.
And the empty other half of the sky
Seemed in its silence as if it knew
What, any moment, might look
through
A chance-gap in that fortress massy :—
Through its fissures you got hints
Of the flying moon, by the shifting tints,
Now, a dull lion-colour, now, brassy
Burning to yellow, and whitest yellow,
Like furnace-smoke just ere the flames
bellow.
All a-simmer with intense strain
To let her through,—then blank again,
At the hope of her appearance failing,
Just by the chapel, a break in the
railing
Shows a narrow path directly across ;
'Tis ever dry walking there, on the
moss—
Besides, you go gently all the way
uphill :
I stooped under and soon felt better :
My head grew light, my limbs more
supple.
As I walked on, glad to have slipt
the fetter ;

My mind was full of the scene I had
left,
That placid flock, that pastor vici-
ferant,
How this outside was pure and
different !
The sermon, now—what a mingled web
Of good and ill ! were either less,
Its fellow had coloured the whole
distinctly ;
But alas for the excellent earnestness,
And the truths, quite true if stated
succinctly,
But as surey false, in their quaint
presentment,
However to pastor and flock's con-
tentment !
Say rather, such truths looked false to
your eyes,
With his provings and parallels
twisted and twined,
Till how could you know them,
grown double their size,
In the natural fog of the good man's
mind ?
Like yonder spots of our roadside
lamps,
Haloed about with the common's
damps.
Truth remains true, the fault's in the
prover ;
The zeal was good, and the aspiration ;
And yet, and yet, yet, fifty times over,
Pharaoh received no demonstration
By his Baker's dream of Baskets
Three,
Of the doctrine of the Trinity.—
Although, as our preacher thus em-
bellished it.
Apparently his hearers relished it
With so unfeigned a gust—who knows
if
They did not prefer our friend to
Joseph ?
But so it is everywhere, one way with
all of them !
These people have really felt, no
doubt,
A something, the motion they style
the Call of them :
And this is their method of bringing
about,

By a mechanism of words and tones,
(So many texts in so many groans)
A sort of reviving or reproducing,
More or less perfectly, (who can
tell?—)

Of the mood itself, that strengthens
by using ;

And how it happens, I understand
well.

A tune was born in my head last
week,

Out of the thump-thump and shriek-
shriek

Of the train, as I came by it, up from
Manchester ;

And when, next week, I take it back
again,

My head will sing to the engine's
clack again,

While it only makes my neighbour's
haunches stir,

—Finding no dormant musical sprout
In him, as in me, to be jolted out.

'Tis the taught already that profit by
teaching ;

He gets no more from the railway's
preaching,

Than, from this preacher who does
the rail's office, I,

Whom therefore the flock casts a
jealous eye on.

Still, why paint over their door
"Mount Zion,"

To which all flesh shall come, saith
the prophecy ?

v

But wherefore be harsh on a single
case ?

After how many modes, this Christ-
mas-Eve,

Does the selfsame weary thing take
place ?

The same endeavour to make you
believe,

And much with the same effect, no
more :

Each method abundantly convincing,
As I say, to those convinced before,

But scarce to be swallowed without
wincing.

By the not-as-yet-convinced. For me,
I have my own church equally.

And in *this* church my faith sprang
first !

(I said, as I reached the rising ground,
And the wind began again, with a burst

Of rain in my face, and a glad rebound
From the heart beneath, as if, God

speeding me,
I entered His church-door, Nature

leading me)
In youth I looked to these very

skies,
And probing their immensities,

I found God there, His visible power ;
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense

Of that power, an equal evidence
That His love, there too, was the

nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod,

Were diviner than a loveless god
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

You know what I mean : God's all,
man's nought :

But also, God, whose pleasure brought
Man into being, stands away

As it were, an handbreadth off, to give
Room for the newly-made to live,

And look at Him from a place apart,
And use His gifts of brain and heart,

Given, indeed, but to keep for ever.
Who speaks of man, then, must not

sever
Man's very elements from man,

Saying, "But all is God's"—whose
plan

Was to create man and then leave
him

Able, His own word saith, to grieve
Him,

But able to glorify Him too,
As a mere machine could never do,

That prayed or praised, all unaware
Of its fitness for aught but praise and

prayer,
Made perfect as a thing of coarse.

Man, therefore, stands on his own
stock

Of love and power as a pin-point
rock,

And, looking to God who ordained
divorce

Of the rock from His boundless continent,
Sees in His Power made evident.
Only excess by a million fold
O'er the power God gave man in the mould.

For, see: Man's hand, first formed
to carry

A few pounds' weight, when taught
to marry

Its strength with an engine's, lifts a
mountain,

-Advancing in power by one degree;
And why count steps through eternity?
But Love is the ever springing fountain:

Man may enlarge or narrow his bed
For the water's play, but the water
head—

How can he multiply or reduce it?
As easy create it, as cause it to cease:
He may profit by it, or abuse it;
But 'tis not a thing to bear increase
As power will: be love less or more
In the heart of man, he keeps it
shut

Or opes it wide as he pleases, but
Love's sum remains what it was before.
So, gazing up, in my youth, at love
As seen through power, ever above
All modes which make it manifest,
My soul brought all to a single test—
That He, the eternal First and Last,
Who, in His power, had so surpassed
All man conceives of what is might,—
Whose wisdom, too, showed infinite,
—Would prove as infinitely good;
Would never, my soul understood,
With power to work all love desires.
Bestow e'en less than man requires:
That He who endlessly was teaching,
Above my spirit's utmost reaching,
What love can do in the leaf or stone.
(So that to master this alone,
This done in the stone or leaf for me,
I must go on learning endlessly)
Would never need that I, in turn,
Should point him out a defect un-
heeded.

And show that God had yet to learn
What the meanest human creature
needed,—

- Not life, to wit, for a few short years,
Tracking His way through doubts
and fears,

While the stupid earth on which I stay
Suffers no change, but passive adds
Its myriad years to myriads.

Though I, He gave it to, decay,
Seeing death come and choose about
me,

And my dearest ones depart without
me.

No! love which, on earth, amid all
the shows of it,

Has ever been seen the sole good of
life in it.

The love, ever growing there, spite
of the strife in it,

Shall arise, made perfect, from death's
repose of it!

And I shall behold Thee, face to face,
O God, and in Thy light retrace

How in all I loved here, still wast
Thou!

Whom pressing to, then, as I fain
would now,

I shall find as able to satiate

The love, Thy gift, as my spirit's
wonder

Thou art able to quicken and subli-
mate.

With this sky of Thine, that I now
walk under,

And glory in Thee as thus I gaze,
Thus, thus! oh, let men keep their
ways

Of seeking Thee in a narrow shrine—
Be this my way! And this *is* mine!

VI

For lo, what think you? suddenly
The rain and the wind ceased, and
the sky

Received at once the full fruition
Of the moon's consummate apparition.
The black cloud-barricade was riven,
Ruined beneath her feet, and driven
Deep in the west; while, bare and
breathless,

North and south and east lay ready
For a glorious Thing, that, dauntless,
deathless,

Sprang across them, and stood steady.

'Twas a moon-rainbow, vast and perfect,
 From heaven to heaven extending,
 perfect
 As the mother-moon's self, full in face.
 It rose, distinctly at the base
 With its seven proper colours chorded,
 Which still, in the rising, were compressed,
 Until at last they coalesced,
 And supreme the spectral creature
 lorded
 In a triumph of whitest white,—
 Above which intervened the night.
 But above night too, like the next,
 The second of a wondrous sequence,
 Reaching in rare and rarer frequency,
 Till the heaven of heavens be circum-
 flexed,
 Another rainbow rose, a mightier,
 Fainter, flushier, and flightier,—
 Rapture dying along its verge !
 Oh, whose foot shall I see emerge,
 Whose, from the straining topmost
 dark.
 On to the keystone of that arc ?

VII

This sight was shown me, there and then,—
 Me, one out of a world of men,
 Singled forth, as the chance might hap
 To another, if in a thunderclap
 Where I heard noise, and you saw
 flame,
 Some one man knew God called his
 name.
 For me, I think I said, "Appear !
 "Good were it to be ever here.
 "If Thou wilt, let me build to Thee
 "Service-tabernacles Three,
 "Where, for ever in Thy presence,
 "In extatic acquiescence,
 "Far alike from thrifless learning
 "And ignorance's undiscerning,
 "I may worship and remain !"
 Thus, at the show above me, gazing
 With upturned eyes, I felt my brain
 Glutted with the glory, blazing
 Throughout its whole mass, over and
 under.
 Until at length it burst asunder,

And out of it bodily there streamed
 The too-much glory, as it seemed,
 Passing from out me to the ground,
 Then palely serpentineing round
 Into the dark with mazy error.

VIII

All at once I looked up with terror.
 He was there.
 He Himself with His human air,
 On the narrow pathway, just before :
 I saw the back of Him, no more—
 He had left the chapel, then, as I.
 I forgot all about the sky.
 No face : only the sight
 Of a sweepy Garment, vast and white
 With a hem that I could recognise.
 I felt terror, no surprise :
 My mind filled with the cataract,
 At one bound, of the mighty fact.
 I remembered, He did say
 Doubtless, that, to this world's end,
 Where two or three should meet and
 pray,
 He would be in the midst, their
 Friend :
 Certainly He was there with them.
 And my pulses leaped for joy
 Of the golden thought without alloy,
 That I saw His very Vesture's hem.
 Then rushed the blood back, cold
 and clear.
 With a fresh enhancing shiver of fear,
 And I hastened, cried out while I
 pressed
 To the salvation of the Vest,
 "But not so, Lord ! It cannot be
 "That Thou, indeed, art leaving me—
 "Me, that have despised Thy friends.
 "Did my heart make no amends ?
 "Thou art the Love of God—above
 "His Power, didst hear me place
 His Love,
 "And that was leaving the world for
 Thee !
 "Therefore Thou must not turn from
 me
 "As if I had chosen the other part.
 "Folly and pride o'ercame my heart.
 "Our best is bad, nor bears Thy test ;
 "Still it should be our very best.

"I thought it best that Thou, the Spirit,
 "Be worshipped in spirit and in truth,
 "And in beauty, as even we require it—
 "Not in the forms burlesque, uncouth,
 "I left but now, as scarcely fitted
 "For Thee: I knew not what I pitied:
 "But, all I felt there, right or wrong.
 "What is it to Thee, who curest sinning?
 "Am I not weak as Thou art strong?
 "I have looked to Thee from the beginning,
 "Straight up to Thee through all the world
 "Which, like an idle scroll, lay furled
 "To nothingness on either side:
 "And since the time Thou wast desied,
 "Spite of the weak heart, so have I
 "Lived ever, and so fain would die,
 "Living and dying, Thee before!
 "But if Thou leavest me—"

IX

Less or more,

I suppose that I spoke thus.
 When, —have mercy, Lord, on us!
 The whole Face turned upon me full.
 And I spread myself beneath it,
 As when the bleacher spreads, to see the it
 In the cleansing sun, his wool,—
 Steeps in the flood of noontide whiteness
 Some defiled, discoloured web—
 So lay I, saturate with brightness.
 And when the flood appeared to ebb,
 Lo, I was walking, light and swift,
 With my senses settling fast and steadying,
 But my body caught up in the whirl
 and drift
 Of the Vesture's amplitude, still eddying
 On, just before me, still to be followed,
 As it carried me after with its motion:
 What shall I say?—was a path were hollowed
 And a man went weltering through the ocean,

Sucked along in the flying wake
 Of the luminous water-snake.
 Darkness and cold were cloven, as through

I passed, upborne yet walking too.
 And I turned to myself at intervals, —
 "So He said, and so it befalls.
 "God who registers the cup
 "Of mere cold water, for His sake
 "To a disciple rendered up,
 "Disdains not His own thirst to slake
 "At the poorest love was ever offered:
 "And because it was my heart I proffered,
 "With true love trembling at the brim,
 "He suffers me to follow Him
 "For ever, my own way,—dispensed
 "From seeking to be influenced
 "By all the less immediate ways
 "That earth, in worships manifold,
 "Adopts to reach, by prayer and praise,
 "The Garment's hem, which, lo, I hold!"

X

And so we crossed the world and stopped.
 For where am I, in city or plain,
 Since I am 'ware of the world again?
 And what is this that rises propped
 With pillars of prodigious girth?
 Is it really on the earth,
 This miraculous Dome of God?
 Has the angel's measuring-rod
 Which numbered cubits, gem from gem,
 'Twixt the gates of the New Jerusalem,
 Meted it out,—and what he meted,
 Have the sons of men completed?
 Binding, ever as he bade,
 Columns in this colonnade
 With arms wide open to embrace
 The entry of the human race
 To the breast of . . . what is it, yon building,
 Ablaze in front, all paint and gilding,
 With marble for brick, and stones of price
 For garniture of the edifice?

Now I see: it is no dream:
 It stands there and it does not seem;
 For ever, in pictures, thus it looks,
 And thus I have read of it in books,
 Often in England, leagues away,
 And wondered how those fountains
 play
 Growing up eternally
 Each to a musical water-tree,
 Whose blossoms drop, a glittering
 boon,
 Before my eyes, in the light of the
 moon,
 To the granite layers underneath,
 Liar and dreamer in your teeth!
 I, the sinner that speak to you,
 Was in Rome this night, and stood,
 and knew
 Both this and more! For see, for see,
 The dark is rent, mine eye is free
 To pierce the crust of the outer wall,
 And I view inside, and all there, all,
 As the swarming hollow of a hive,
 The whole Basilica alive!
 Men in the chancel, body, and nave,
 Men on the pillars' architrave,
 Men on the statues, men on the
 tombs
 With popes and kings in their por-
 phyry wombs,
 All furnishing in expectation
 Of the main-altar's consummation.
 For see, for see, the rapturous moment
 Approaches, and earth's best endow-
 ment
 Blends with heaven's: the taper-fires
 Pant up, the winding brazen spires
 Heave loftier yet the baldachin;
 The incense-gaspings, long kept in,
 Suspire in clouds; the organ blatant
 Holds his breath and grovels latent,
 As if God's hushing finger grazed him,
 (Like Behemoth when He praised
 him)
 At the silver bell's shrill tinkling,
 Quick cold drops of terror sprinkling
 On the sudden pavement strewed
 With faces of the multitude.
 Earth breaks up, time drops away,
 In flows heaven, with its new day
 Of endless life, when He who trod,
 Very Man and very God,

This earth in weakness, shame and
 pain,
 Dying the death whose signs remain
 Up yonder on the accursed tree,—
 Shall come again, no more to be
 Of captivity the thrall,
 But the one God, all in all,
 King of kings and Lord of lords,
 As His servant John received the
 words,
 "I died, and live for evermore!"

XI

Yet I was left outside the door.
 Why sate I there on the threshold-
 stone,
 Left till He returns, alone
 Save for the Garment's extreme fold
 Abandoned still to bless my hold?
 My reason, to my doubt, replied,
 As if a book were opened wide,
 And at a certain page I traced
 Every record undefaced,
 Added by successive years,
 The harvestings of truth's stray ears
 Singly gleaned, and in one sheaf
 Bound together for belief.
 Yes, I said—that He will go
 And sit with these in turn. I know.
 Their faith's heart beats, though he
 head swims
 Too giddily to guide her limbs,
 Disabled by their palsy-stroke
 From propping me. Though Rome's
 gross yoke
 Drops off, no more to be endured,
 Her teaching is not so obscured
 By errors and perversities,
 That no truth shines athwart the lies:
 And He, whose eye detects a spark
 Even where, to man's, the whole seems
 dark,
 May well see flame where each be-
 holder
 Acknowledges the embers smoulder.
 But I, a mere man, fear to quit
 The clue God gave me as most fit
 To guide my footsteps through life's
 maze.
 Because Himself discerns all ways
 Open to reach Him: I, a man
 He gave to mark where faith began

To swerve aside, till from its summit
Judgment drops her damning plummet,

Pronouncing such a fatal space
Departed from the Founder's base :
He will not bid me enter too,
But rather sit, as now I do,
Awaiting His return outside.

'Twas thus my reason straight
replied,

And joyously I turned, and pressed
The Garment's skirt upon my breast,
Until, afresh its light suffusing me,
My heart cried,—what has been
abusing me

That I should wait here lonely and
coldly,

Instead of rising, entering boldly,
Baring truth's face, and letting drift
Her veils of lies as they choose to
shift ?

Do these men praise Him? I will
raise

My voice up to their point of praise !
I see the error : but above
The scope of error, see the love.—
Oh, love of those first Christian days !

Fanned so soon into a blaze,
From the spark preserved by the
trampled sect,

That the antique sovereign Intellect
Which then sate ruling in the world,
Like a change in dreams, was hurled
From the throne he reigned upon :

—You looked up, and he was gone !
Gone, his glory of the pen !

—Love, with Greece and Rome in ken,
Bade her scribes abhor the trick
Of poetry and rhetoric,
And exult, with hearts set free,
In blessed imbecility
Scrawled, perchance, on some torn
sheet,

Leaving Livy incomplete.
Gone, his pride of sculptor, painter !

—Love, while able to acquaint her
With the thousand statues yet
Fresh from chisel, pictures wet
From brush, she saw on every side,
Chose rather with an infant's pride
To frame those portents which impart
Such unction to true Christian Art.

Gone, Music too! The air was
stirred

By happy wings : Terpander's bird
(That, when the cold came, fled
away)

Would tarry not the wintry day,—
As more-enduring sculpture must,
Till a filthy saint rebuked the gust
With which he chanced to get a sight
Of some dear naked Aphrodite
He glanced a thought above the toes
of,

By breaking zealously her nose off,
Love, surely, from that music's
lingering,

Might have filched her organ-finger-
ing

Nor chose rather to set prayings
To hog-grunts, praises to horse-
neighings.

Love was the startling thing, the new ;
Love was the all-sufficient too ;
And seeing that, you see the rest.
As a babe can find its mother's breast
As well in darkness as in light,
Love shut our eyes, and all seemed
right.

True, the world's eyes are open now :
—Less need for me to disallow
Some few that keep Love's zone un-
buckled,

Peevish as ever to be suckled,
Lulled by the same old baby-prattle
With intermixture of the rattle,
When she would have them creep,
stand steady

Upon their feet, or walk already,
Not to speak of trying to climb.
I will be wise another time,
And not desire a wall between us,
When next I see a church-roof cover
So many species of one genus,
All with foreheads bearing *Love*
Written above the earnest eyes of
them ;

All with breasts that beat for beauty,
Whether sublimed, to the surprise of
them.

In noble daring, steadfast duty,
The heroic in passion, or in action,—
Or, lowered for the senses' satisfac-
tion.

To the mere outside of human
creatures,
Mere perfect form and faultless
features,
What! with all Rome here, whence
to levy
such contributions to their appetite,
With women and men in a gorgeous
bevy,
They take, as it were, a padlock, and
clap it tight
On their southern eyes, restrained
from feeding
On the glories of their ancient read-
ing,
On the beauties of their modern
singing,
On the wonders of the builder's
bringing,
On the majesties of Art around
them,
And, all these loves, late struggling
incessant,
When faith has at last united and
bound them,
They offer up to God for a present!
Why, I will, on the whole, be rather
proud of it.
And, only taking the act in reference
To the other recipients who might
have allowed of it,
I will rejoice that God had the
preference!

XII

So I summed up my new resolves:
Too much love there can never be.
And where the intellect devolves
Its function on love exclusively,
I, as one who possesses both,
Will accept the provision, nothing loth,
—Will feast my love, then depart
elsewhere,
That my intellect may find its share.
And pender, O soul, the while thou
departest,
And see thou applaud the great heart
of the artist,
Who, examining the capabilities
Of the block of marble he has to
fashion

Into a type of thought or passion
Not always, using obvious facilities,
Shapes it, as any artist can,
Into a perfect symmetrical man,
Complete from head to foot of the
life-size.
Such as old Adam stood in his wife's
eyes,
But, now and then, bravely aspires to
consummate
A Colossus by no means so easy to
come at,
And uses the whole of his block for
the bust.
Leaving the minds of the public to
finish it,
Since cut it ruefully short he must:
On the face alone he expends his
devotion;
He rather would mar than resolve to
diminish it,
Saying, "Applaud me for this
grand notion
"Of what a face n ; be! As for
completing it
"In breast and body and limbs, do
that, you!"
All hail! I fancy how, happily meet-
ing it,
A trunk and legs would perfect the
statue,
Could man carve so as to answer
volition.
And how much nobler than petty
cavils,
A hope to find, in my spirit-travels,
Some artist of another ambition,
Who having a block to carve, no
bigger,
Has spent his power on the opposite
quest,
And believed to begin at the feet was
best—
For so may I see, ere I die, the
whole figure!

XIII

No sooner said than out in the night!
And still as we swept through storm
and night,
My heart beat lighter and more light:

And lo, as before, I was walking
 swift,
 With my senses settling fast and
 steadying,
 But my body caught up in the whirl
 and drift
 Of the Vesture's amplitude, still
 eddying
 On just before me, still to be followed,
 As it carried me after with its motion,
 —What shall I say?—as a path were
 hollowed,
 And a man went weltering through
 the ocean,
 Sucked along in the flying wake
 Of the luminous water-snake.

XIV

Alone! I am left alone once more—
 (Save for the Garment's extreme fold
 Abandoned still to bless my hold)
 Alone, beside the entrance-door
 Of a sort of temple,—perhaps a college,
 —Like nothing I ever saw before
 At home in England, to my knowledge.
 The tall, old, quaint, irregular town!
 It may be . . . though *which*, I can't
 affirm . . . any
 Of the famous middle-age towns of
 Germany;
 And this flight of stairs where I sit
 down,
 Is it Halle, Weimar, Cassel, or
 Frankfort,
 Or Göttingen, that I have to thank
 for't?
 It may be Göttingen,—most likely.
 Through the open door I catch
 obliquely
 Glimpses of a lecture-hall;
 And not a bad assembly neither—
 Ranged decent and symmetrical
 On benches, waiting what's to see
 there;
 Which, holding still by the Vesture's
 hem,
 I also resolve to see with them,
 Cautious this time how I suffer to slip
 The chance of joining in fellowship
 With any that call themselves His
 friends,
 As these folks do, I have a notion.

But hist—a buzzing and emotion!
 All settle themselves, the while ascends
 By the creaking rail to the lecture-
 desk.
 Step by step, deliberate
 Because of his cranium's over-freight,
 Three parts sublime to one grotesque,
 If I have proved an accurate guesser,
 The hawk-nosed, high-cheek-boned
 Professor.
 I felt at once as if there ran
 A shoot of love from my heart to the
 man
 That sallow, virgin-minded, studious
 Martyr to mild enthusiasm.
 As he uttered a kind of cough-
 prelude
 That woke my sympathetic spasm,
 (Beside some spitting that made me
 sorry)
 And stood, surveying his auditory
 With a wan pure look, well nigh
 celestial.—
 —Those blue eyes had survived so
 much!
 While, under the foot they could not
 smutch,
 Lay all the fleshly and the bestial.
 Over he bowed, and arranged his
 notes,
 Till the auditory's clearing of throats
 Was done with, died into a silence:
 And, when each glance was upward
 sent,
 Each bearded mouth composed in-
 tent.
 And a pin might be heard drop half
 a mile hence.—
 He pushed back higher his spectacles
 Let the eyes stream out like lamps
 from cells.
 And giving his head of hair—a
 hake
 Of undressed tow, for colour and
 quantity—
 One rapid and impatient shake,
 (As our own young England adjusts
 a jaunty tie
 When about to impart, on mature
 digestion,
 Some thrilling view of the surplice-
 question)

—The Professor's grave voice, sweet
though hoarse,
Broke into his Christmas-Eve's dis-
course.

XV

And he began it by observing
How reason dictated that men
Should rectify the natural swerving,
By a reversion, now and then,
To the well-heads of knowledge, few
And far away, whence rolling grew
The life-stream wide whereat we
drink.

Commingled, as we needs must think,
With waters alien to the source :
To do which, aimed this Eve's dis-
course.

Since, where could be a fitter time
For tracing backward to its prime,
This Christianity, this lake,
This reservoir, whereat we slake.
From one or other bank, our thirst ?
So he proposed inquiring first
Into the various sources whence
This Myth of Christ is derivable ;
Demanding from the evidence,
(Since plainly no such life was live-
able)

How these phenomena should class ?
Whether 'twere best opine Christ was,
Or never was at all, or whether
He was and was not, both together—
It matters little for the name,
So the Idea be left the same :
Only, for practical purpose' sake,
'Twas obviously as well to take
The popular story,—understanding
How the ineptitude of the time,
And the penman's prejudice, expand-
ing

Fact into fable fit for the clime,
Had, by slow and sure degrees, trans-
lated it

Into this myth, this individuum,—
Which, when reason had strained and
abated it

Of foreign matter, gave, for residuum,
A Man !—a right true man, however,
Whose work was worthy a man's en-
deavour !

Work, that gave warrant almost
sufficient

To his disciples, for rather believing
He was just omnipotent and omnis-
cient,

As it gives to us, for as frankly re-
ceiving

His word, their tradition,—which,
though it meant

Something entirely different

From all that those who only heard it.
In their simplicity thought and averred
it,

Had yet a meaning quite as respect-
able :

For, among other doctrines delectable,
Was he not surely the first to insist
on

The natural sovereignty of our race ?—
Here the lecturer came to a pausing-
place.

And while his cough, like a drouthy
piston.

Tried to dislodge the husk that grew
to him,

I seized the occasion of bidding adieu
to him.

The Vesture still within my hand.

XVI

I could interpret its command.

This time He would not bid me enter
The exhausted air-bell of the Critic.

Truth's atmosphere may grow mephitic
When Papist struggles with Dissenter,
Impregnating its pristine clarity,

—One, by his daily fare's vulgarity,
Its gust of broken meat and garlic ;

—One, by his soul's too-much pre-
suming,

To turn the frankincense's fuming
And vapours of the candle starlike

Into the cloud her wings she buoys
on :

And each, that sets the pure air seeth-
ing,

Poisoning it for healthy breathing—
But the Critic leaves no air to poison ;

Pumps out by a ruthless ingenuity
Atom by atom, and leaves you—

vacuity.

Thus much of Christ, does he reject?
 And what retain? His intellect?
 What is it I must reverence duly?
 Poor intellect for worship, truly,
 Which tells me simply what was told
 Of mere morality, bereft
 Of the God in Christ, be all that's
 left)

Elsewhere by voices manifold;
 With this advantage, that the stater
 Made nowise the important stumble
 Of adding, he, the sage and humble,
 Was also one with the Creator.
 You urge Christ's followers' simplicity;
 But how does shifting blame, evade
 it?

Have wisdom's words no more felicity?
 The stumbling-block, His speech—
 who laid it?

How comes it that for one found able,
 To sift the truth of it from fable,
 Millions believe it to the letter?
 Christ's goodness, then—does that
 fare better?

Strange goodness, which upon the
 score

Of being goodness, the mere due
 Of man to fellow-man, much more
 To God,—should take another view
 Of its possessor's privilege,
 And bid him rule his race! You
 pledge

Your fealty to such rule? What,
 all—

From Heavenly John and Attic Paul,
 And that brave weather-battered
 Peter

Whose stout faith only stood com-
 pleter

For buffets, sinning to be pardoned.
 As the more his hands hauled nets,
 they hardened,—

All, down to you, the man of men,
 Professing, here at Göttingen,
 Compose Christ's flock! So you and I
 Are sheep of a good man! and why?
 The goodness,—how did he acquire
 it?

Was it self-gained, did God inspire it?
 Choose which; then tell me, on what
 ground

Should its possessor dare propound

His claim to rise o'er us an inch?
 Were goodness all some man's inven-
 tion,

Who arbitrarily made mention
 What we should follow, and where
 flinch.—

What qualities might take the style
 Of right and wrong,—and had such
 guessing

Met with as general acquiescing
 As graced the Alphabet erewhile,
 When A got leave an Ox to be,
 No Camel (quoth the Jews) like G,—
 For thus inventing thing and title
 Worship were that man's fit requital,
 But if the common conscience must
 Be ultimately judge, adjust
 Its apt name to each quality
 Already known,—I would decree
 Worship for such mere demonstration
 And simple work of nomenclature,
 Only the day I praised, not Nature,
 But Harvey, for the circulation.

I would praise such a Christ, with
 pride

And joy, that he, as none beside,
 Had taught us how to keep the mind
 God gave him, as God gave his kind,
 Freer than they from fleshly taint!

I would call such a Christ our Saint,
 As I declare our Poet, him

Whose insight makes all others dim:
 A thousand poets pried at life,
 And only one amid the strife

Rose to be Shakespeare! Each shall
 take

His crown. I'd say, for the world's
 sake—

Though some objected—"Had we
 seen

"The heart and head of each, what
 screen

"Was broken there to give them
 light,

"While in ourselves it shuts the
 sight,

"We should no more admire, per-
 chance,

"That these found truth out at a
 glance,

"Than marvel how the bat discerns
 "Some pitch-dark cavern's fifty turns,

"Led by a finer tact, a gift
 "He boasts, which other birds must
 shift

"Without, and grope as best they
 can."

No, freely I would praise the man,—
 Nor one whit more, if he contended
 That gift of his, from God, descended.
 Ah, friend, what gift of man's does
 not?

No nearer Something, by a jot,
 Rise an infinity of Nothings
 Than one: take Euclid for your
 teacher:

Distinguish kinds: do crownings,
 clothings,

Make that Creator which was crea-
 ture?

Multiply gifts upon his head,
 And what, when all's done, shall be
 said

But . . . the more gifted he, I ween!
 That one's made Christ, another,
 Pilate,

And This might be all That has
 been,—

So what is there to frown or smile at?
 What is left for us, save, in growth,
 Of soul, to rise up, far past both,
 From the gift looking to the Giver,
 And from the cistern to the River,
 And from the finite to Infinity,
 And from man's dust to God's
 divinity?

XVII

Take all in a word: the Truth in
 God's breast

Lies trace for trace upon ours im-
 pressed:

Though He is so bright and we so
 dim.

We are made in His image to witness
 Him;

And were no eye in us to tell,
 Instructed by no inner sense,
 The light of Heaven from the dark
 of Hell,

That light would want its evidence,—
 Though Justice, Good and Truth
 were still

Divine, if, by some demon's will,

Hatred and wrong had been pro-
 claimed

Law through the worlds, and Right
 misnamed.

No mere exposition of morality
 Made or in part or in totality,
 Should win you to give it worship,
 therefore:

And if no better proof you will care
 for,

—Whom do you count the worst man
 upon earth?

Be sure, he knows, in his conscience,
 more

Of what Right is, than arrives at
 birth

In the best man's acts that we bow
 before:

This last *knows* better—true; but my
 fact is.

'Tis one thing to know, and another
 to practise;

And thence I conclude that the real
 God-function

Is to furnish a motive and injunc-
 tion

For practising what we know already.
 And such an injunction and such a
 motive

As the God in Christ, do you waive,
 and "heady,

High minded," hang your tablet-
 votive

Outside the fane on a finger-post?
 Morality to the uttermost,

Supreme in Christ as we all confess,
 Why need *we* prove would avail no
 jot

To make Him God, if God He were
 not?

What is the point where Himself lays
 stress?

Does the precept run "Believe in
 Good,

"In Justice, Truth, now understood
 "For the first time?"—or, "Believe
 in ME,

"Who lived and died, yet essentially
 "Am Lord of Life?" Whoever can
 take

The same to his heart and for mere
 love's sake

Conceive of the love,—that man
 obtains
 A new truth ; no conviction gains
 Of an old one only, made intense
 By a fresh appeal to his faded sense.

XVIII

Can it be that He stays inside?
 Is the Vesture left me to commune
 with?
 Could my soul find aught to sing in
 tune with
 Even at this lecture, if she tried?
 Oh, let me at lowest sympathise
 With the lurking drop of blood that
 lies
 In the desiccated brain's white roots
 Without a throb for Christ's attri-
 butes.
 As the Lecturer makes his special
 boast!
 If love's dead there, it has left a
 ghost.
 Admire we, how from heart to brain
 (Though to say so strike the doctors
 dumb)
 One instinct rises and falls again
 Restoring the equilibrium.
 And how when the Critic had done
 his best,
 And the Pearl of Price, at reason's
 test,
 Lay dust at I ashes levigable
 On the Professor's lecture-table;
 When we looked for the inference
 and monition
 That our faith, reduced to such a
 condition,
 Be swept forthwith to its natural
 dust-hole, —
 He bids us, when we least expect it,
 Take back our faith,—if it be not
 just whole,
 Yet a pearl indeed, as his tests affect
 it,
 Which fact pays the damage done re-
 wardingly,
 So, prize we our dust and ashes
 accordingly!
 "Go home and venetrate the Myth
 "I thus have experimented with—

"This Man, continue to adore him
 "Rather than all who went before
 him,
 "And all who ever followed after!"—
 Surely for this I may praise you, my
 brother!
 Will you take the praise in tears or
 laughter?
 That's one point gained: can I com-
 pass another?
 Unlearned love was safe from spurn-
 ing—
 Can't we respect your loveless learn-
 ing?
 Let us at least give Learning honour!
 What laurels had we showered upon
 her.
 Girding her loins up to perturb
 Our theory of the Middle Verb;
 Or Turklike brandishing a scimeter
 O'er anapaests in comic-trimeter;
 Or curing the halt and maimed Ike-
 tides,
 While we lounged on at our indebted
 ease:
 Instead of which, a tricky demon
 Sets her at Titus or Philemon!
 When Ignorance wags his ears of
 leather
 And hates God's word, 'tis altogether;
 Nor leaves he his congenial thistles
 To go and browse on Paul's Epistles.
 —And you, the audience, who might
 ravage
 The world wide, enviably savage,
 Nor heed the cry of the retriever,
 More than Herr Heine (before his
 fever).—
 I do not tell a lie so arrant
 As say my passion's wings are furled up,
 And, without the plainest Heavenly
 warrant,
 I were ready and glad to give this
 world up —
 But still, when you rub the brow
 meticulous,
 And ponder the profit of turning
 holy
 If not for God's, for your own sake
 solely,
 —God forbid I should find you ridi-
 culous!

Deduce from this lecture all that eases
you,

Nay, call yourselves, if the calling
pleases you,

"Christians,"—abhor the Deist's
pravity. —

Go on, you shall no more move my
gravity,

Than, when I see boys ride a-cock-
horse

I find it in my heart to embarrass
them

By hinting that their stick's a mock
horse,

And they really carry what they say
carries them.

NIX

So sat I talking with my mind.

I did not long to leave the door

And find a new church, as before,

But rather was set and inclined

To prolong and enjoy the gentle
resting

From further tracking and trying and
testing.

This tolerance is a genial mood !

(Said I, and a little pause ensued).

One trims the bark 'twixt shoal and
shelf.

And sees, each side, the good effects
of it,

A value for religion's self,

A carelessness about the sects of it.

Let me enjoy my own conviction,

Not watch my neighbour's faith with
fretfulness,

Still spying there some dereliction

Of truth, perversity, forgetfulness !

Better a mild indifferentism.

To teach that all our faiths (though
duller

His shines through a dull spirit's
prism)

Originally had one colour—

Sending me on a pilgrimage

Through ancient and through modern
times

To many peoples, various climes,

Where I may see Saint, Savage, Sage

Fuse their respective creeds in one

Before the general Father's throne !

XX

. . . 'Twas the horrible storm began
afresh !

The black night caught me in his
mesh,

Whirled me up, and flung me prone.
I was left on the college-step alone.

I looked, and far there, ever fleeting
Far, far away, the receding gesture,

And looming of the lessening Vesture,
Swept forward from my stupid hand.

While I watched my foolish heart ex-
pand

In the lazy glow of benevolence,
O'er the various modes of man's belief.

I sprang up with fear's vehemence.

—Needs must there be one way, our

chief

Best way of worship : let me strive

To find it, and when found, contrive

My fellows also take their share.

This constitutes my earthly care :

God's is above it and distinct !

For I, a man, with men am linked,

And not a brute with brutes ; no gain

That I experience, must remain

Unshared : but, should my best en-
deavour

To share it, fail—subsisteth ever

God's care above, and I exult

That God, by God's own ways occult,

May—doth, I will believe—bring
back

All wanderers to a single track !

Meantime, I can but testify

God's care for me—no more, can I—

It is but for myself I *know*.

The world rolls witnessing around me

Only to leave me as it found me ;

Men cry there, but my ear is slow.

Their races flourish or decay

—What boots it, while yon lucid way

Loaded with stars, divides the vault ?

How soon my soul repairs its fault

When, sharpening senses' hebetude,

She turns on my own life ! So viewed,

No mere mote's-breadth but teems
immense

With witnessings of providence :

And woe to me if when I look

Upon that record, the sole book

Unsealed to me, I take no heed
Of any warning that I read!
Have I been sure, this Christmas-Eve,
God's own hand did the rainbow
weave.

Whereby the truth from heaven slid
Into my soul?—I cannot bid
The world admit He stooped to heal
My soul, as if in a thunder-peal
Where one heard noise, and one saw
flame,

I only knew He named my name,
And what is the world to me, for
sorrow

Or joy in its censures, when to-morrow
It drops the remark, with just-turned
head

Then, on again—That man is dead?
Yes,—but for me—my name called,
—drawn

As a conscript's lot from the lap's
black yawn.

He has dipt into on a battle-dawn:
Bid out of life by a nod, a glance,
Stumbling, mute-mazed, at nature's
chance,

With a rapid finger circled round,
Fixed to the first poor inch of ground,
To fight from, where his foot was
found:

Whose ear but a minute since lay free
To the wide camp's buzz and gos-
sipry—

Summoned, a solitary man,
To end his life where his life began,
From the safe glad rear, to the dread-
ful van!

Soul of mine, hadst thou caught and
held

By the hem of the Vesture . . .

XXI

And I caught
At the flying Robe, and unrepelled
Was lapped again in its folds full-
fraught

With warmth and wonder and delight,
God's mercy being infinite.

And scarce had the words escaped
my tongue,

When, at a passionate bound, I sprung

Out of the wandering world of
rain,

Into the little chapel again.

XXII

How else was I found there, bolt
upright

On my bench, as if I had never left
it?

Never flung out on the common at
night

Nor met the storm and wedge-like
left it,

Seen the raree-show of Peter's suc-
cessor,

Or the laboratory of the Professor!

For the Vision, *that* was true, I wist,
True as that heaven and earth exist.

There sate my friend, the yellow and
tall.

With his neck and its wen in the
self-same place;

Yet my nearest neighbour's cheek
showed gall,

She had slid away a contemptuous
space:

And the old fat woman, late so
placable,

Eyed me with symptoms, hardly
mistakable,

Of her milk of kindness turning
rancid:

In short a spectator might have
fancied

That I had nodded betrayed by a
slumber,

Yet kept my seat, a warning ghastly,
Through the heads of the sermon,

nine in number,

To wake up now at the tenth and
lastly.

But again, could such a disgrace have
happened?

Each friend at my elbow had surely
nudged it;

And, as for the sermon, where did
my nap end?

Unless I heard it, could I have
judged it?

Could I report as I do at the close,
First, the preacher speaks through
his nose:

Second, his gesture is too emphatic ;
 Thirdly, to waive what's pedagogic,
 The subject-matter itself lacks logic :
 Fourthly, the English is ungrammatic.
 Great news ! the preacher is found
 no Pascal,

Whom, if I pleased, I might to the
 task call

Of making square to a finite eye

The circle of infinity,

And find so all-but-just-succeeding !

Great news ! the sermon proves no
 reading

Where bee-like in the flowers I may
 bury me,

Like Taylor's, the immortal Jeremy !

And now that I know the very worst
 of him,

What was it I thought to obtain at
 first of him ?

Ha ! Is God mocked, as He asks ?

Shall I take on me to change His tasks,

And dare, despatched to a river-head

For a simple draught of the element,

Neglect the thing for which He sent,

And return with another thing in-
 stead ? -

Saying . . . " Because the water
 found

" Welling up from underground,

" Is mingled with the taints of earth.

" While Thou, I know, dost laugh at
 dearth,

" And couldest, at a word, convulse

" The world with the leap of its river-
 pulse, --

" Therefore I turned from the ooziings
 muddy,

" And bring thee a chalice I found,
 instead :

" See the brave veins in the breccia
 ruddy !

" One would suppose that the marble
 bled.

" What matters the water ? A hope
 I have nursed,

" That the waterless cup will quench
 my thirst."

—Better have knelt at the poorest
 stream

That trickles in pain from the straitest
 rift !

For the less or the more is all God's
 gift,

Who blocks up or breaks wide the
 granite-seam.

And here, is there water or not, to
 drink ?

I, then, in ignorance and weakness,
 Taking God's help, have attained to
 think

My heart does best to receive in
 meekness

This mode of worship, as most to His
 mind.

Where earthly aids being cast behind,

His All in All appears serene,

With the thinnest human veil between.

Letting the mystic Lamps, the Seven,

The many motions of His spirit,

Pass, as they list, to earth from
 Heaven.

For the preacher's merit or demerit,

It were to be wished the flaws were
 fewer

In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,

Which lies as safe in a golden ewer ;

But the main thing is, does it hold
 good measure ?

Heaven soon sets right all other
 matters !—

Ask, else, these ruins of humanity.

This flesh worn out to rags and
 tatters,

This soul at struggle with insanity,

Who thence take comfort, can I
 doubt,

Which an empire gained, were a loss
 without.

May it be mine ! And let us hope

That no worse blessing befall the Pope,

Turn'd sick at last of the day's
 buffoonery,

Of his posturings and his petticoatings,

Beside the Bourbon bully's gloatings

In the bloody orgies of drunk
 poltroonery !

Nor may the Professor forego its
 peace

At Göttingen, presently, when, in the
 dusk

Of his life, if his cough, as I fear,
 should increase,

Prophesied of by that horrible husk ;

And when, thicker and thicker, the
darkness fills
The world through his misty spec-
tacles,
And he gropes for something more
substantial
Than a fable, myth, or personifica-
tion,
May Christ do for him, what no mere
man shall,
And stand confessed as the God of
salvation!
Meantime, in the still recurring
fear
Lest myself, at unawares, be found,
While attacking the choice of my
neighbours round,
Without my own made—I choose
here!
The giving out of the hymn reclaims
me;
I have done!—And if any blames
me,
Thinking that merely to touch in
brevity
The topics I dwell on, were unlaw-
ful,
Or, worse, that I trench, with undue
levity,
On the bounds of the Holy and the
awful,
I praise the heart, and pity the head
of him,
And refer myself to THEE, instead of
him;
Who head and heart alike discernest,
Looking below light speech we
utter,
When the frothy spume and frequent
sputter
Prove that the soul's depths boil in
earnest!
May the truth shine out, stand ever
before us!
I put up pencil and join chorus
To Hepzibah Tune, without further
apology,
The last five verses of the third
section
Of the seventeenth hymn in Whit-
field's Collection,
To conclude with the doxology.

EASTER-DAY

I

How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me,
—Not the mere task of making real
That duty up to its ideal,
Effecting thus, complete and whole,
A purpose of the human soul
For that is always hard to do;
But hard, I mean, for me and you
To realise it, more or less,
With even the moderate success
Which commonly repays our strife
To carry out the aims of life.
“This aim is greater,” you may say,
“And so more arduous every way.”
—But the importance of the fruits
Still proves to man, in all pursuits,
Proportional encouragement.
“Then, what if it be God's intent
“That labour to this one result
“Shall seem unduly difficult?”
—Ah, that's a question in the dark—
And the sole thing that I remark
Upon the difficulty, this;
We do not see it where it *is*,
At the beginning of the race;
As we proceed, it shifts its place,
And where we looked for palms to
fall,
We find the tug's to come, that's
all.

II

At first you say, “The whole, or
chief
“Of difficulties, is Belief.
“Could I believe once thoroughly,
“The rest were simple. What?
Am I
“An idiot, do you think? A beast?
“Prove to me only that the least
“Command of God is God's indeed,
“And what injunction shall I need
“To pay obedience? Death so nigh
“When time must end, eternity
“Begin, and cannot I compute?
“Weigh loss and gain together? suit
“My actions to the balance drawn,
“And give my body to be sawn

"Asunder, hacked in pieces, tied
 "To horses, stoned, burned, cruci-
 fied,
 "Like any martyr of the list?
 "How gladly,—if I made acquist,
 "Through the brief minutes' fierce
 annoy,
 "Of God's eternity of joy."

III

—And certainly you name the point
 Whereon all turns: for could you
 joint
 This flexile finite life once tight
 Into the fixed and infinite,
 You, safe inside, would spurn what's
 out,
 With carelessness enough, no doubt—
 Would spurn mere life: but where
 time brings
 To their next stage your reasonings,
 Your eyes, late wide, begin to wink
 Nor see the path so well, I think.

IV

You say, "Faith may be, one agrees,
 "A touchstone for God's purposes,
 "Even as ourselves conceive of them.
 "Could He acquit us or condemn
 "For holding what no hand can
 loose,
 "Rejecting what we can't but
 choose?
 "As well award the victor's wreath
 "To whosoever should take breath
 "Duly each minute while he lived—
 "Grant Heaven, because a man con-
 trived
 "To see the sunlight every day
 "He walked forth on the public way.
 "You must mix some uncertainty
 "With faith, if you would have faith
 be.
 "Why, what but faith, do we abhor
 "And idolise each other for—
 "—Faith in our evil, or our good,
 "Which is or is not understood
 "Aright by those we love or those
 "We hate, thence called our friends
 or foes?

"Your mistress saw your spirit's grace,
 "When, turning from the ugly face,
 "I found belief in it too hard;
 "And both of us have our reward.
 "—Yet here a doubt peeps: well
 for us
 "Weak beings, to go using thus
 "A touchstone for our little ends,
 "And try with faith the foes and
 friends;
 "—But God, bethink you! I would
 fain
 "Conceive of the Creator's reign
 "As based upon exacter laws
 "Than creatures build by with ap-
 plause.
 "In all God's acts—(as Plato cries
 "He doth)—He *should* geometrise.
 "Whence, I desiderate . . ."

V

I see!

You would grow smoothly as a tree,
 Soar heavenward, straightly up like
 fire—
 God bless you—there's your world
 entire
 Needing no faith, if you think fit;
 Go there, walk up and down in it!
 The whole creation travails, groans—
 Contrive your music from its moans,
 Without or let or hindrance, friend!
 That's an old story, and its end
 As old—you come back (be sincere)
 With every question you put here
 (Here where there once was, and is
 still,
 We think, a living oracle,
 Whose answers you stood carping at)
 This time flung back unanswered flat,
 Besides, perhaps, as many more
 As those that drove you out before,
 Now added, where was little need!
 Questions impossible, indeed,
 To us who sate still, all and each
 Persuaded that our earth had speech
 Of God's, writ down, no matter if
 In cursive type or hieroglyph,—
 Which one fact frees us from the yoke
 Of guessing why He never spoke.
 You come back in no better plight
 Than when you left us,—am I right?

VI

So the old process, I conclude,
Goes on, the reasoning's pursued
Further. You own, "Tis well
averred,

"A scientific faith's absurd.

"—Frustrates the very end 'twas
meant

"To serve: so I would rest content

"With a mere probability,

"But, probable; the chance must lie

"Clear on one side, —lie all in rough.

"So long as there is just enough

"To pin my faith to, though it hap

"Only at points: from gap to gap

"One hangs up a huge curtain so,

"Grandly, nor seeks to have it go

"Foldless and flat along the wall:

"—What care I that some interval

"Of life less plainly might depend

"On God? I'd hang there to the
end;

"And thus I should not find it hard

"To be a Christian and debarred

"From trailing on the earth, till
furled

"Away by death! —Renounce the
world?

"Were that a mighty hardship?
Plan

"A pleasant life, and straight some
man

"Beside you, with, if he thought fit,

"Abundant means to compass it,

"Shall turn deliberate aside

"To try and live as, if you tried

"You clearly might, yet most despise.

"One friend of mine wears out his
eyes,

"Slighting the stupid joys of sense,

"In patient hope that, ten years
hence,

"Somewhat completer, he may see

"His list of *lepidoptera*:

"While just the other who most
laughs

"At him, above all epitaphs

"Aspires to have his tomb describe

"Himself as Sole among the tribe

"Of snuff-box-fanciers, who possessed

"A Grignon with the Regent's crest.

"So that, subduing as you want,

"Whatever stands predominant

"Among my earthly appetites

"For tastes, and smells, and sounds,
and sights,

"I shall be doing that alone,

"To gain a palm-branch and a
throne,

"Which fifty people undertake

"To do, and gladly, for the sake

"Of giving a Semitic guess,

"Or playing pawns at blindfold
chess."

VII

Good! and the next thing is,—look
round

For evidence enough. 'Tis found,

No doubt: as is your sort of mind,

So is your sort of search—you'll find

What you desire, and that's to be

A Christian: what says History?

How comforting a point it were

To find some mummy-scrap declare

There lived a Moses! Better still,

Prove Jonah's whale translatable

Into some quicksand of the seas,

Isle, cavern, rock, or what you please,

That Faith might clap her wings and
crow

From such an eminence! Or, no—

The Human Heart's best; you prefer

Making that prove the minister

To truth; you probe its wants and
needs

And hopes and fears, then try what
creeds

Meet these most aptly,—resolute

That Faith plucks such substantial
fruit

Wherever these two correspond,

She little needs to look beyond,

To puzzle out what Orpheus was,

Or Dionysius Zagrias.

You'll find sufficient, as I say,

To satisfy you either way.

You wanted to believe; your pains

Are crowned—you do: and what
remains?

Renounce the world! —Ah, were it
done

By merely cutting one by one

Your limbs off, with your wise head
last,

How easy were it !—how soon past,
If once in the believing mood !
Such is man's usual gratitude,
Such thanks to God do we return,
For not exacting that we spurn
A single gift of life, forego
One real gain,—only taste them so
With gravity and temperance,
That those mild virtues may enhance
Such pleasures, rather than abstract—
Last spice of which, will be the fact
Of love discerned in every gift ;
While, when the scene of life shall
shift

And the gay heart be taught to ache,
As sorrows and privations take
The place of joy,—the thing that
seems

Mere misery, under human schemes,
Becomes, regarded by the light
Of Love, as very near, or quite
As good a gift as joy before.
So plain is it that all the more
God's dispensation's merciful.
More pettishly we try and cull
Briars, thistles, from our private plot.
To mar God's ground where thorns
are not !

VIII

Do you say this, or I ?—Oh, you !
Then, what, my friend,—(so I pursue
Our parley)—you indeed opine
That the Eternal and Divine
Did, eighteen centuries ago,
In very truth . . . Enough ! you
know

The all-stupendous tale,—that Birth,
That Life, that Death ! And all, the
earth

Shuddered at,—all, the heavens grew
black

Rather than see ; all, Nature's rack
And throe at dissolution's brink
Attested,—it took place, you think,
Only to give our joys a zest,
And prove our sorrows for the best ?
We differ, then ! Were I, still pale
And heartstruck at the dreadful tale,

Waiting to hear God's voice declare
What horror followed for my share,
As implicated in the deed,
Apart from other sins,—concede
That if He blacked out in a blot
My brief life's pleasantness, 'twere not
So very disproportionate !
Or there might be another fate—
I certainly could understand
(If fancies were the thing in hand)
How God might save, at that Day's
price,

The impure in their impurities,
Leave formal licence and complete
To choose the fair, and pick the sweet,
But there be certain words, broad,
plain,

Uttered again and yet again,
Hard to mistake, to overgloss—
Announcing this world's gain for loss,
And bidding us reject the same :
The whole world lieth (they proclaim)
In wickedness,—come out of it !—
Turn a deaf ear, if you think fit,
But I who thrill through every nerve
At thought of what deaf ears de-
serve,—

How do you counsel in the case ?

IX

"I'd take, by all means, in your
place,

"The safe side, since it so appears :

"Deny myself, a few brief years,

"The natural pleasure, leave the
fruit

"Or cut the plant up by the root.

"Remember what a martyr said

"On the rude tablet overhead—

"I was born sickly, poor and mean,

"A slave : no misery could screen

"The holders of the pearl of price

"From Cæsar's envy ; therefore twice

"I fought with beasts, and three
times saw

"My children suffer by his law—

"At last my own release was earned :

"I was some time in being burned,

"But at the close a Hand came
through

"The fire above my head, and drew

"My soul to Christ, whom now I see."

"Sergius, a brother, writes for me."

"This testimony on the wall"

"For me I have forgot it all."

"You say right; this were not so bold!"

"And since one now is debarr'd"

"From this, why not escape some one?"

"By such a deed?"

X

—Then begin,

To the old point, revulsion new

(For 'tis just this, I bring you to)

If after all we should mistake,

And so renounce life for the sake

Of death and nothing else? You hear

Our friends we jeered at, send the jeer

Back to ourselves with good effect:

'There *were* my beetles to collect!'

'My box—a trifle, I confess,

'But here I hold it, ne'ertheless!'

Poor idiots, (let us pluck up heart

And answer) we, the better part

Have chosen, though 'twere only
hope,—

Nor envy moles like you that grope

Amid' your veritable muck,

More than the grasshoppers would
truck,

For yours, their passionate life away,

That spends itself in leaps all day

To reach the sun, you want the eyes

To see, as they the wings to rise

And match the noble hearts of them!

So, the contemner we condemn,—

And, when doubt strikes us, so, we
ward

Its stroke off, caught upon our guard,

—Not struck enough to overturn

Our faith, but shake it—make us learn

What I began with, and, I wis,

End, having proved,—how hard it is

To be a Christian!

XI

"Proved, or not,

"Howe'er you wis, small thanks, I
wot,

'You get of mine, for taking pains

"To make it hard to me. Who gains

"By that, I wonder? Here I live

"In trusting ease: and do you drive

"At causing me to lose what most

"Yourself would mourn for when
'twas lost?"

XII

But, do you see, my friend, that thus
You leave St. Paul for Eschylus?

Who made his Titan's arch-device
The giving men *blind hopes* to spice
The meal of life with, else devoured
In bitter haste, while lo! Death
loured

Before them at the platter's edge!

If faith should be, as we allege,

Quite other than a condiment

To heighten flavours with, or meant

(Like that brave curry of his Grace)

To take at need the victuals' place?

If having dined you would digest

Besides, and turning to your rest

Should find instead . . .

XIII

Now, you shall see

And judge if a mere foppery

Pricks on my speaking! I resolve

To utter . . . yes, it shall devolve

On you to hear as solemn, strange

And dread a thing as in the range

Of facts, --or fancies, if God will—

E'er happened to our kind! I still

Stand in the cloud, and while it
wraps

My face, ought not to speak, per-
haps:

Seeing that as I carry through

My purpose, if my words in you

Find veritable listeners,

My story, reason's self avers

Must needs be false—the happy
chance!

While, if each human countenance

I meet in London streets all day,

Be what I fear,—my warnings fray

No one, and no one they convert,

And no one helps me to assert

How hard it is to really be

A Christian, and in vacancy

I pour this story!

XIV

I commence

By trying to inform you, whence
It comes that every Easter-night
As now, I sit up, watch, till light
Shall break, those chimney-stacks
and roofs

Give, through my window-pane, grey
proofs

That Easter-day is breaking slow.
On such a night, three years ago,
It chanced that I had cause to cross
The common, where the chapel was,
Our friend spoke of, the other day
You've not forgotten, I dare say.
I fell to musing of the time
So close, the blessed matin-prime
All hearts leap up at, in some guise—
One could not well do otherwise.

Insensibly my thoughts were bent
Toward the main point; I overwent
Much the same ground of reasoning
As you and I just now: one thing
Remained, however—one that tasked
My soul to answer; and I asked,
Fairly and frankly, what might be
That History, that Faith, to me—

Me there—not me, in some domain
Built up and peopled by my brain,
Weighing its merits as one weighs
Mere theories for blame or praise,
—The Kingcraft of the Lucumons,
Or Fourier's scheme, its pros and
cons,—

But as *my* faith, or none at all.

'How were my case, now, should I fall

'Dead here, this minute—do I lie

'Faithful or faithless?'—Note that I

Inclined thus ever!—little prone

For instance, when I slept alone

In childhood, to go calm to sleep

And leave a closet where might keep

His watch perdue some murderer

Waiting till twelve o'clock to stir,

As good, authentic legends tell

He might—'But how improbable!

'How little likely to deserve

'The pains and trial to the nerve

'Of thrusting head into the dark,'—

Urged my old nurse, and bade me

mark

Besides, that, should the dreadful
scout

Really lie hid there, to leap out

At first turn of the rusty key

It were small gain that she could see

In being killed upon the floor

And losing one night's sleep the more.

I tell you, I would always burst

The door ope, know my fate at first.

This time, indeed, the closet penned

No such assassin: but a friend

Rather, peeped out to guard me, fit

For counsel, Common Sense, to-wit,

Who said a good deal that might
pass,—

Heartening, impartial too, it was,

Judge else: 'For, soberly now,—who

'Should be a Christian if not you?'

Hear how he smoothed me down).

'One takes

'A whole life, sees what course it
makes

'Mainly, and not by fits and starts—

'In spite of stoppage which imparts

'Fresh value to the general speed:

'A life, with none, would fly indeed:

'Your progressing is slower—right!

'We deal with progressing, not flight.

'Through baffling senses passionate,

'Fancies as restless,—with a freight

'Of knowledge cumbersome enough

'To sink your ship when waves grow
rough,

'Not serve as ballast in the hold,

'I find, 'mid dangers manifold,

'The good bark answers to the helm

'Where Faith sits, easier to o'erwhelm

'Than some stout peasant's heavenly
guide,

'Whose hard head could not, if it tried,

'Conceive a doubt, or understand

'How senses hornier than his hand

'Should 'tice the Christian off, his
guard—

'More happy! But shall we award

'Less honour to the hull, which,
dogged

'By storms, a mere wreck, water
logged,

'Masts by the board, and bulwarks
gone,

'And stanchions going, yet bears on,—

'Than to mere life-boats, built to save,
 'And triumpho'er the breaking wave?
 'Make perfect your good ship as
 these,
 'And what were her performances!' I
 added—'Would the ship reached
 home!
 'I wish indeed "God's kingdom
 come—"
 'The day when I shall see appear
 'His bidding, as my duty, clear
 'From doubt! And it shall dawn,
 that day,
 'Some future season; Easter may
 'Prove, not impossibly, the time
 'Yes, that were striking—fates would
 chime
 'So aptly Laster-morn, to bring
 'The June it!—deeper in the
 Spring
 'Than now, however, when there's
 snow
 'Capping the hills; for earth must
 show
 'All signs of meaning to pursue
 'Her tasks as she was wont to do—
 '—The lark, as taken by surprise
 'As we ourselves, shall recognise
 'Sudden the end: for suddenly
 'It comes—the dreadfulness must be
 'In that—all warrants the belief—
 '“At night it cometh like a thief.”
 'I fancy why the trumpet blows;
 '—Plainly, to wake one. From re-
 pose
 'We shall start up, at last awake
 'From life, that insane dream we take
 'For waking now, because it seems.
 'And as, when now we wake from
 dreams,
 'We say, while we recall them, “Fool,
 '“To let the chance slip, linger cool
 '“When such adventure offered! Just
 '“A bridge to cross, a dwarf to thrust
 '“Aside, a wicked mage to stab—
 '“And, lo ye, I had kissed Queen
 Mab.”—
 'So shall we marvel why we grudged
 'Our labours here, and idly judged
 'Of Heaven, we might have gained,
 but lose!
 'Lose? Talk of loss, and I refuse

'To plead at all! I speak no worse
 'Nor better than my ancient nurse
 'When she would tell me in my youth
 'I well deserved that shapes uncouth
 'Should fright and tease me in my
 sleep
 'Why did I not in memory keep
 'Her precept for the evil's cure?
 '“Pinch your own arm, boy, and be
 sure
 '“You'll wake forthwith!””

xv

And as I said
 This nonsense, throwing back my
 head
 With light complacent laugh, I found
 Suddenly all the midnight round
 One fire. The dome of Heaven had
 stood
 As made up of a multitude
 Of handbreadth cloudlets, one vast
 rack
 Of ripples infinite and black,
 From sky to sky. Sudden there
 went,
 Like horror and astonishment,
 A fierce vindictive scribble of red
 Quick flame across, as if one said
 (The angry scribe of Judgment)
 'There—
 'Burn it!' And straight I was aware
 That the whole ribwork round, minute
 Cloud touching cloud beyond compute,
 Was tinted each with its own spot
 Of burning at the core, till clot
 Jammed against clot, and split its fire
 Over all heaven, which 'gan suspire
 As fanned to measure equable,—
 As when great conflagrations kill
 Night overhead, and rise and sink,
 Reflected. Now the fire would shrink
 And wither off the blasted face
 Of heaven, and I distinct could trace
 The sharp black ridgy outlines left
 Unburned like network—then, each
 cleft
 The fire had been sucked back into,
 Regorged, and out it surging flew
 Furiously, and night writhed inflamed,
 Till, tolerating to be tamed

No longer, certain rays world-wide
 Shot downwardly, on every side,
 Caught past escape ; the earth was lit ;
 As if a dragon's nostril split
 And all his famished ire o'erflowed ;
 Then, as he winced at his Lord's goad,
 Back he inhaled : whereat I found
 The clouds into vast pillars bound,
 Based on the corners of the earth,
 Propping the skies at top : a dearth
 Of fire in the violet intervals,
 Leaving exposed the utmost walls
 Of time, about to tumble in
 And end the world.

XVI

I felt begin

The Judgment-Day : to retrocede
 Was too late now.—' In very deed,
 (I uttered to myself) ' that Day !'
 The intuition burned away
 All darkness from my spirit too—
 There, stood I, found and fixed, I
 knew,
Choosing the world. The choice was
 made—

And naked and disguiseless stayed,
 And unevadeable, the fact.
 My brain held ne'ertheless compact
 Its senses, nor my heart declined
 Its office—rather, both combined
 To help me in this juncture—I
 Lost not a second.—agony
 Gave boldness : there, my life had
 end

And my choice with it—best defend,
 Applaud them ! I resolved to say,
 ' So was I framed by Thee, this way
 ' I put to use Thy senses here !
 ' It was so beautiful, so near,
 ' Thy world,—what could I do but
 choose

' My part there ? Nor did I refuse
 ' To look above the transient boon
 ' In time—but it was hard so soon
 ' As in a short life, to give up
 ' Such beauty : I had put the cup
 ' Undrained of half its fulness, by :
 ' But, to renounce it utterly,

That was too hard ! Nor did the
 Cry

' Which bade renounce it, touch my
 brain
 ' Authentically deep and plain
 ' Enough, to make my lips let go.
 ' But Thou, who knowest all, dost know
 ' Whether I was not, life's brief while,
 ' Endeavouring to reconcile
 ' Those lips—to a tardily, alas !
 ' To letting the dear remnant pass,
 ' One day,—some drops of earthly good
 ' Untasted ! Is it for this mood,
 ' That Thou, whose earth delights so
 well,
 ' Hast made its complement a Hell ?'

XVII

A final belch of fire like blood,
 Overbroke all, next, in one flood
 Of doom. Then fire was sky, and
 sky
 Was fire, and both, one ecstasy,
 Then ashes. But I heard no noise
 (Whatever was) because a Voice
 Beside me spoke thus, " All is done,
 " Time ends. Eternity's begun,
 " And thou art judged for evermore !"

XVIII

I looked up ; all was as before ;
 Of that cloud-Tophet overhead,
 No trace was left : I saw instead
 The common round me, and the sky
 Above, stretched drear and empty
 Of life : 'twas the last watch of night,
 Except what brings the morning quite,
 When the armed angel, conscience-
 clear,
 His task nigh done, leans o'er his
 spear
 And gazes on the earth he guards,
 Safe one night more through all its
 wards,
 Till God relieve him at his post.
 ' A dream—a waking dream at most !'
 (I spoke out quick that I might shake
 The horrid nightmare off, and wake.)
 ' The world's gone, yet the world is
 here ?
 ' Are not all things as they appear ?
 ' Is Judgment past for me alone ?
 '—And where had place the Great
 White Throne ?

'The rising of the Quick and Dead?
'Where stood they, small and great?
Who read

'The sentence from the Opened
Book?'

So, by degrees, the blood forsook
My heart, and let it beat afresh:
I knew I should break through the
mesh

Of horror, and breathe presently—
When, lo, again, the Voice by me!

XIX

I saw . . . Oh, brother, 'mid far sands
The palm-tree-cinctured city stands, --
Bright-white beneath, as Heaven,
bright-blue,

Above it, while the years pursue
Their course, unable to abate
Its paradisaal laugh at fate:
One morn,—the Arab staggers blind
O'er a new tract of death, calcined
To ashes, silence, nothingness,—
Striving, with dizzy wits, to guess
Whence fell the blow: what if, 'twixt
skies

And prostrate earth, he should surprise
The imaged Vapour, head to foot,
Surveying, motionless and mute,
Its work, ere, in a whirlwind rapt,
It vanish up again?—So hapt
My chance. He stood there. Like
the smoke

Pillared o'er Sodom, when day
broke,—

I saw Him. One magnific pall
Mantled in massive fold and fall
His Dread, and coiled in snaky
swathes

About His feet: night's black, that
bathes

All else, broke, grizzled with despair,
Against the soul of blackness there.

A gesture told the mood within—
That wrapped right hand which based
the chin,—

That intense meditation fixed
On His procedure,—pity mixed
With the fulfilment of decree.
Motionless, thus, He spoke to me,
Who fell before His feet, a mass,
No man now.

XX

"All is come to pass,

"Such shows are over for each soul

"They had respect to. In the roll

"Of Judgment which convinced
mankind

"Of sin, stood many, bold and blind,

"Terror must burn the truth into:

"Their fate for them!—thou had'st
to do

"With absolute omnipotence,

"Able its judgments to dispense

"To the whole race, as every one

"Were its sole object: that is done:

"God is, thou art,—the rest is hurled

"To nothingness for thee. This
world,

"This finite life, thou hast preferred,

"In disbelief of God's own word,

"To Heaven and to Infinity.

"Here, the probation was for thee,

"To show thy soul the earthly mixed

"With Heavenly, it must choose be-
twixt.

"The earthly joys lay palpable,—

"A taint, in each, distinct as well;

"The Heavenly flitted, faint and rare,

"Above them, but as truly were

"Taintless, so in their nature, best.

"Thy choice was earth: thou didst
attest

"'Twas fitter spirit should subserve

"The flesh, than flesh refine to serve

"Beneath the spirit's play. Advance

"No claim to their inheritance

"Who chose the spirit's fugitive

"Brief gleams, and thought, 'This
were to live

"Indeed, if rays, completely pure

"From flesh that dulls them, should
endure,—

"Not shoot in meteor-light athwart

"Our earth, to show how cold and
swart

"It lies beneath their fire, but stand

"As stars should, destined to expand,

"Prove veritable worlds, our home!"

"Thou said'st,—'Let Spirit star the
dome

"Of sky, that flesh may miss no peak,

"No nook of earth,—I shall not seek

" 'Its service further !' Thou art shut
 " Out of the Heaven of Spirit ; glut
 " Thy sense upon the world : 'tis thine
 " For ever—take it !"

XXI

" How ? Is mine.
 ' The world ? ' (I cried, while my soul broke
 Out in a transport.) ' Hast thou spoke
 ' Plainly in that ? Earth's exquisite
 ' Treasures of wonder and delight,
 ' For me ?'

XXII

The austere Voice returned,—
 " So soon made happy ? Hadst thou learned
 " What God accounteth happiness,
 " That wouldst not find it hard to guess
 " What Hell may be His punishment
 " For those who doubt if God invent
 " Better than they. Let such men rest
 " Content with what they judged the best.
 " Let the Unjust usurp at will :
 " The Filthy shall be filthy still :
 " Miser, there waits the gold for thee !
 " Hater, indulge thine enmity !
 " And thou, whose heaven, self-ordained,
 " Was to enjoy earth unrestrained,
 " Do it ! Take all the ancient show !
 " The woods shall wave, the rivers flow,
 " And men apparently pursue
 " Their works, as they were wont to do,
 " While living in probation yet :
 " I promise not thou shalt forget
 " The past, now gone to its account,
 " But leave thee with the old amount
 " Of faculties, nor less nor more,
 " Unvisited, as heretofore,
 " By God's free spirit, that makes an end.
 " So, once more, take thy world ;
 expend

" Eternity upon its show,
 " Flung thee as freely as one rose
 " Out of a summer's opulence,
 " Over the Eden-barrier whence
 " Thou art excluded. Knock in vain !"

XXIII

I sate up. All was still again.
 I breathed free : to my heart, back fled
 The warmth. ' But, all the world !'
 (I said)
 I stooped and picked a leaf of fern,
 And recollected I might learn
 From books, how many myriad sorts
 Exist, if one may trust reports,
 Each as distinct and beautiful
 As this, the very first I cull.
 Think, from the first leaf to the last !
 Conceive, then, earth's resources !
 Vast
 Exhaustless beauty, endless change
 Of wonder ! and this foot shall range
 Alps, Andes,—and this eye devour
 The bee-bird and the aloë-flower ?

XXIV

And the Voice, " Welcome so to rate
 " The arras-folds that variegate
 " The earth, God's antechamber, well !
 " The wise, who waited there, could tell
 " By these, what royalties in store
 " Lay one step past the entrance-door.
 " For whom, was reckoned, not too much,
 " This life's munificence ? For such
 " As thou,—a race, whereof not one
 " Was able, in a million.
 " To feel that any marvel lay
 " In objects round his feet all day ;
 " Nor one, in many millions more,
 " Willing, if able, to explore
 " The secreter, minuter charm !
 "—Brave souls, a fern-leaf could disarm
 " Of power to cope with God's intent,—
 " Or scared if the South Firmament

"With North-fire did its wings re-
fledge !
"All partial beauty was a pledge
"Of beauty in its plenitude :
"But since the pledge sufficed thy
mood,
"Retain it—plenitude be theirs
"Who looked above !"

XXV

Though sharp despairs
Shot through me, I held up, bore on.
"What is it though my trust is gone
"From natural things? Henceforth
my part
"Be less with Nature than with Art !
"For Art supplants, gives mainly worth
"To Nature; 'tis Man stamps the
earth—
"And I will seek his impress, seek
"The statuary of the Greek,
"Italy's painting—there my choice
"Shall fix !"

XXVI

"Obtain it," said the Voice.
"The one form with its single act,
"Which sculptors laboured to ab-
stract,
"The one face, painters tried to draw,
"With its one look, from throngs
they saw !
"And that perfection in their soul,
"These only hinted at? The whole,
"They were but parts of? What
each laid
"His claim to glory on?—afraid
"His fellow-men should give him rank
"By the poor tentatives he shrank
"Smitten at heart from all the more,
"That gazers pressed in to adore !
"Shall I be judged by only these?
"If such his soul's capacities,
"Even while he trod the earth,—
think, now,
"What pomp in Buonarotti's brow,
"With its new palace-brain where
dwells
"Superb the soul, unvexed by cells
"That crumbled with the transient
clay !
"What visions will his right hand's
sway

"Still turn to form, as still they
burst
"Upon him? How will he quench
thirst.
"Titanically infantine,
"Laid at the breast of the Divine?
"Does it confound thee,—this first
page
"Emblazoning man's heritage?—
"Can this alone absorb thy sight,
"As if they were not infinite,—
"Like the omnipotence which tasks
"Itself, to furnish all that asks
"The soul it means to satiate?
"What was the world, the starry state
"Of the broad skies,—what, all dis-
plays
"Of power and beauty intermixed,
"Which now thy soul is chained be-
twixt,—
"What, else, than needful furniture
"For life's first stage? God's work,
be sure,
"No more spreads wasted, than falls
scant :
"He filled, did not exceed, Man's
want
"Of beauty in this life. And pass
"Life's line,—and what has earth to
do,
"Its utmost beauty's appanage,
"With the requirements of next
stage?
"Did God pronounce earth 'very
good' ?
"Needs must it be, while understood
"For man's preparatory state ;
"Nothing to heighten nor abate :
"But transfer the completeness here,
"To serve a new state's use,—and
dear
"Deficiency gapes every side !
"The good, tried once, were bad,
retried.
"See the enwrapping rocky niche,
"Sufficient for the sleep, in which
"The lizard breathes for ages safe :
"Split the mould—and as this would
chafe
"The creature's new world-widened
sense,
"One minute after you dispense

"The thousand sounds and sights
 roke
 "I—him, at the chisel's stroke,—
 "So in God's eyes, the earth's first
 stuff
 "Was, neither more nor less, enough
 "To house man's soul, man's need
 fulfil.
 "You reckoned it immeasurable :
 "So thinks the lizard of his vault !
 "Could God be taken in default,
 "Short of contrivances, by you,—
 "Or reached, ere ready to pursue
 "His progress through eternity ?
 "That chambered rock, the lizard's
 world,
 "Your easy mallet's blow has hurled
 "To nothingness for ever ; so,
 "Has God abolished at a blow
 "This world, wherein His saints were
 pent,—
 "Who, though, found grateful and
 content,
 "With the provision there, as thou,
 "Yet knew He would not disallow
 "Their spirits' hunger, felt as well,—
 "Unsated,—not unsatable,
 "As Paradise gives proof. Deride
 "Their choice now, thou who sit'st
 outside ! "

XXVII

I cried in anguish, ' Mind, the mind,
 ' So miserably cast behind,
 ' To gain what had been wisely lost !
 ' Oh, let me strive to make the most
 ' Of the poor stunted soul, I nipped
 ' Of budding wings, else well equipt
 ' For voyage from summer isle to isle !
 ' And though she needs must reconcile
 ' Ambition to the life on ground,
 ' Still, I can profit by late found
 ' But precious knowledge. Mind is
 best—
 ' I will seize mind, forego the rest
 ' And try how far my tethered
 strength
 ' May crawl in this poor breadth and
 length.
 '—Let me, since I can fly no more,
 ' At least spin dervish-like about
 ' (Till giddy rapture almost doubt

' I fly) through circling sciences,
 ' Philosophies and histories !
 ' Should the whirl slacken there, then
 Verse,
 ' Fining to music, shall asperse
 ' Fresh and fresh fire-dew, till I strain
 ' Intoxicate, half-break my chain !
 ' Not joyless, though more favoured
 feet
 ' Stand calm, where I want wings to
 beat
 ' The floor ? At least earth's bond is
 broke ! "

XXVIII

Then, (sickening even while I spoke)
 ' Let me alone ! No answer, pray,
 ' To this ! I know what Thou wilt
 say !
 ' All still is earth's,—to Know, as
 much
 ' As Feel its truths, which if we touch
 ' With sense or apprehend in soul,
 ' What matter ? I have reached the
 goal—
 ' "Whereto does Knowledge serve !"
 will burn
 ' My eyes, too sure, at every turn !
 ' I cannot look back now, nor stake
 ' Bliss on the race, for running's sake.
 ' The goal's a ruin like the rest !—
 ' "And so much worse thy latter
 quest,
 (Added the Voice) "that even on
 earth,
 "Whenever, in man's soul, had birth
 "Those intuitions, grasps of guess,
 "That pull the more into the less,
 "Making the finite comprehend
 "Infinity, the bard would spend
 "Such praise alone, upon his craft,
 "As, when wind-lyres obey the waft,
 "Goes to the craftsman who arranged
 "The seven strings, changed them
 and rechanged—
 "Knowing it was the South that
 harped.
 "He felt his song, in singing, warped,
 "Distinguished his and God's part :
 whence
 "A world of spirit as of sense

"Was plain to him, yet not too plain,
 "Which he could traverse, not remain
 "A guest in :—else were permanent
 "Heaven upon earth, its gleams were meant
 "To sting with hunger for the light,—
 "Made visible in Verse, despite
 "The veiling weakness,—truth by means
 "Of fable, showing while it screens,—
 "Since highest truth, man e'er supplied.
 "Was ever fable on outside.
 "Such gleams made bright the earth an age ;
 "Now, the whole sun's his heritage !
 "Take up thy world, it is allowed,
 "Thou who hast entered in the cloud !"

XXIX

Then I—"Behold, my spirit bleeds,
 "Catches no more at broken reeds,—
 "But lilies flower those reeds above—
 "I let the world go, and take love !
 "Love survives in me, albeit those
 "I loved are henceforth masks and shows,
 "Not loving men and women : still
 "I mind how love repaired all ill,
 "Cured wrong, soothed grief, made earth amend
 "With parents, brothers, children, friends !
 "Some semblance of a woman yet
 "With eyes to help me to forget,
 "Shall live with me ; and I will match
 "Departed love with love, attach
 "Its fragments to my whole, nor scorn
 "The poorest of the grains of corn
 "I save from shipwreck on this isle,
 "Trusting its barrenness may smile
 "With happy foodful green one day,
 "More precious for the pains. I pray,
 "For love, then, only !"

XXX

At the word,
 The Form, I looked to have been stirred
 With pity and approval, rose
 O'er me, as when the headsman throws

Axe over shoulder to make end—
 I fell prone, letting Him expend
 His wrath, while, thus, the inflicting
 Voice
 Smote me. "Is this thy final choice ?
 "Love is the best ? 'Tis somewhat late !
 "And all thou dost enumerate
 "Of power and beauty in the world,
 "The mightiness of love was curled
 "Inextricably round about.
 "Love lay within it and without,
 "To clasp thee,—but in vain ! Thy soul
 "Still shrunk from Him who made the whole,
 "Still set deliberate aside
 "His love !—Now take love ! Well betide
 "Thy tardy conscience ! Hasten to take
 "The show of love for the name's sake,
 "Remembering every moment Who
 "Beside creating thee unto
 "These ends, and these for thee, was said
 "To undergo death in thy stead
 "In flesh like thine : so ran the tale.
 "What doubt in thee could counter-vail
 "Belief in it ? Upon the ground
 "That in the story had been found
 "Too much love ? How could God love so ?
 "He who in all His works below
 "Adapted to the needs of man,
 "Made love the basis of the plan,—
 "Did love, as was demonstrated :
 "While man, who was so fit instead,
 "To hate, as every day gave proof,—
 "You thought man, for his kind's behoof,
 "Both could and would invent that scheme
 "Of perfect love—'twould well become
 "Cain's nature thou wast wont to praise,
 "Not tally with God's usual ways !"

XXXI

And I cowered deprecatingly—
 'Thou Love of God! Or let me die,
 'Or grant what shall seem Heaven
 almost!
 'Let me not know that all is lost,
 'Though lost it be—leave me not tied
 'To this despair, this corpse-like
 bride!
 'Let that old life seem mine—no
 more—
 'With limitation as before,
 'With darkness, hunger, toil, dis-
 tress:
 'Be all the earth a wilderness!
 'Only let me go on, go on,
 'Still hoping ever and anon
 'To reach one eve the Better Land!'

XXXII

Then did the Form expand, expand—
 I knew Him through the dread dis-
 guise,
 As the whole God within His eyes
 Embraced me.

XXXIII

When I lived again,
 The day was breaking,—the grey
 plain
 I rose from, silvered thick with dew.
 Was this a vision? False or true?
 Since then, three varied years are
 spent,
 And commonly my mind is bent

To think it was a dream—be sure
 A mere dream and a temperature—
 The last day's watching: then the
 night,—
 The shock of that strange Northern
 Light
 Set my head swimming, bred in me
 A dream. And so I live, you see,
 Go through the world, try, prove,
 reject,
 Prefer, still struggling to effect
 My warfare; happy that I can
 Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
 Not left in God's contempt apart,
 With ghastly smooth life, dead at
 heart,
 Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.
 Thank God, she still each method
 tries
 To catch me, who may yet escape,
 She knows, the fiend in angel's shape!
 Thank God no paradise stands barred
 To entry, and I find it hard
 To be a Christian, as I said!
 Still every now and then my head
 Raised glad, sinks mournful—all
 grows drear
 Spite of the sunshine, while I fear
 And think, 'How dreadful to be
 grudging
 'No ease henceforth, as one that's
 judged,
 'Condemned to earth for ever, shut
 'From Heaven' . . .
 But Easter-Day breaks! But
 Christ rises! Mercy every way
 Is infinite,—and who can say?

MEN AND WOMEN

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

I

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of
evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our
sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight,
stray or stop
As they crop—

II

Was the site once of a city great and
gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its
prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils,
wielding far
Peace or war.

III

Now—the country does not even
boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure,
certain riils
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else
they run
Into one)

IV

Where the domed and daring palace
shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on
nor be prest,
Twelve abreast.

V

And such plenty and perfection, see,
of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time,
o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed
alone,
Stock or stone—

VI

Where a multitude of men breathed
joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up,
dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike,
the gold
Bought and sold.

VII

Now,—the single little turret that
remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the
gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head
of blossom winks
Through the chinks—

VIII

Marks the basement whence a tower
in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring all round, the
chariots traced
As they raced
And the monarch and his minions
and his dames
Viewed the games.

IX

And I know, while thus the quiet-
coloured eve

Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tink-
ling fleece

In such peace,
And the slopes and hills in undistin-
guished grey

Melt away—

X

That a girl with eager eyes and
yellow hair

Waits me there
In the turret, whence the charioteers
caught soul

For the goal,
When the king looked, where she
looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

XI

But he looked upon the city, every
side,

Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with
temples, all the glades'

Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,
—and then,
All the men!

XII

When I do come, she will speak not,
she will stand,

Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the
first embrace

Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight
and speech

Each on each.

XIII

In one year they sent a million fighters
forth

South and north.
And they built their gods a brazen
pillar high

As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in
full force—

Gold, of course.

XIV

Oh, heart! oh, blood that freezes,
blood that burns!

Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and
sin!

Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories
and the rest.

Love is best!

A LOVER'S QUARREL

I

Oh, what a dawn of day!
How the March sun feels like May!
All is blue again
After last night's rain,
And the South dries the hawthorn-
spray.

Only, my Love's away!
I'd as lief that the blue were grey.

II

Runnels, which rillels swell,
Must be dancing down the dell
With a foamy head
On the beryl bed
Paven smooth as a hermit's cell;
Each with a tale to tell,
Could my Love but attend as well.

III

Dearest, three months ago!
When we lived blocked-up with
snow,—

When the wind would edge
In and in his wedge,
In, as far as the point could go—
Not to our ingle, though,
Where we loved each the other so!

IV

Laughs with so little cause!
We devised games out of straws.
We would try and trace
One another's face
In the ash, as an artist draws;
Free on each other's flaws.
How we chattered like two church
daws!

V

What's in the "Times"?—a scold
At the emperor deep and cold;
He has taken a bride
To his gruesome side,
That's as fair as himself is bold:
There they sit ermine-stoled,
And she powders her hair with gold.

VI

Fancy the Pampas' sheen!
Miles and miles of gold and green
Where the sun-flowers blow
In a solid glow,
And to break now and then the
screen—
Black neck and eyeballs keen,
Up a wild horse leaps between!

VII

Try, will our table turn?
Lay your hands there light, and yearn
Till the yearning slips
Thro' the finger tips
In a fire which a few discern,
And a very few feel burn,
And the rest, they may live and
learn!

VIII

Then we would up and pace,
For a change, about the place,
Each with arm o'er neck.
'Tis our quarter-deck,
We are seamen in woeful case.
Help in the ocean-space!
Or, if no help, we'll embrace.

IX

See, how she looks now, drest
In a slogging-cap and vest.
'Tis a huge fur cloak—
Like a reindeer's yoke
Falls the lappet along the breast:
Sleeves for her arms to rest,
Or to hang, as my Love likes best.

X

Teach me to flirt a fan
As the Spanish ladies can,
Or I tint your lip
With a burnt stick's tip

And you turn into such a man!
Just the two spots that span
Half the bill of the young male swan.

XI

Dearest, three months ago
When the mesmeriser Snow
With his hand's first sweep
Put the earth to sleep,
'Twas a time when the heart could
show
All—how was earth to know,
'Neath the mute hand's to-and-fro!

XII

Dearest, three months ago
When we loved each other so,
Lived and loved the same
Till an evening came
When a shaft from the Devil's bow
Pierced to our ingle-glow,
And the friends were friend and foe!

XIII

Not from the heart beneath—
'Twas a bubble born of breath,
Neither sneer nor vaunt,
Nor reproach nor taunt.
See a word, how it severeth!
Oh, power of life and death
In the tongue, as the Preacher saith!

XIV

Woman, and will you cast
For a word, quite off at last,
Me, your own, your you,—
Since, as Truth is true,
I was you all the happy past—
Me do you leave aghast
With the memories we amassed?

XV

Love, if you knew the light
That your soul casts in my sight,
How I look to you
For the pure and true,
And the beauteous and the right,—
Bear with a moment's spite
When a mere mote threatens the
white!

XVI

What of a hasty word?
Is the fleshly heart not stirred
By a worm's pin-prick
Where its roots are quick?
See the eye, by a fly's-foot blurred—
Ear, when a straw is heard
Scratch the brain's coat of curd!

XVII

Foul be the world or fair,
More or less, how can I care?
'Tis the world the same
For my praise or blame,
And endurance is easy there.
Wrong in the one thing rare—
Oh, it is hard to bear!

XVIII

Here's the spring back or close,
When the almond-blossom blows;
We shall have the word
In that minor third
There is none but the cuckoo knows—
Heaps of the guelder-rose!
I must bear with it, I suppose.

XIX

Could but November come,
Were the noisy birds struck dumb
At the warning slash
Of his driver's-lash—
I would laugh like the valiant Thumb
Facing the castle glum
And the giant's fee-faw-fum!

XX

Then, were the world well stript
Of the gear wherein equipped
We can stand apart,
Heart dispense with heart
In the sun, with the flowers un-
nipped,—
Oh, the world's hangings ripped,
We were both in a bare-walled crypt!

XXI

Each in the crypt would cry
"But one freezes here! and why?
When a heart as chill
At my own would thrill

Back to life, and its fires out-fly?
Heart, shall we live or die?
The rest, . . . settle it by and by!"

XXII

So, she'd efface the score,
And forgive me as before.
Just at twelve o'clock
I shall hear her knock
In the worst of a storm's uproar—
I shall pull her through the
door—
I shall have her for evermore!

EVELYN HOPE

I

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-
flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass.
Little has yet been changed, I
think—
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays thro' the hinge's
chink.

II

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my
name—
It was not her time to love: beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir—
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,
And the sweet white brow is all of
her.

III

It is too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And just because I was thrice as old,
And our paths in the world diverged
so wide,
Each was nought to each, must I be
told?
We were fellow mortals, nought
beside?

IV

No, indeed ! for God above
 Is great to grant, as mighty to
 make,
 And creates the love to reward the
 love,
 I claim you still, for my own love's
 sake !
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
 Through worlds I shall traverse,
 not a few
 Much is to learn and much to forget
 Ere the time be come for taking
 you.

V

But the time will come, —at last it will,
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant,
 I shall say,
 In the lower earth, in the years long
 still,
 That body and soul so pure and gay?
 Why your hair was amber, I shall
 divine,
 And your mouth of your own ger-
 anium's red
 And what you would do with me, in
 fine,
 In the new life come in the old one's
 stead.

VI

I have lived, I shall say, so much
 since then,
 Given up myself so many times,
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the
 climes ;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full
 scope,
 Either I missed or itself missed me —
 And I want and find you, Evelyn
 Hope !
 What is the issue ? let us see !

VII

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while ;
 My heart seemed full as it could
 hold—
 There was place and to spare for the
 frank young smile
 And the red young mouth and the
 hair's young gold.

So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to
 keep—

See, I shut it inside the sweet cold
 hand.

There, that is our secret ! go to sleep ;
 You will wake, and remember, and
 understand.

UP AT A VILLA —DOWN IN
THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN
 PERSON OF QUALITY.)

I

HAD I but plenty of money, money
 enough and to spare,
 The house for me, no doubt, were a
 house in the city-square.
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one
 leads at the window there !

II

Something to see, by Bacchus, some-
 thing to hear, at least !
 There, the whole day long, one's life
 is a perfect feast ;
 While up at a villa one lives, I main-
 tain it, no more than a beast.

III

Well now, look at our villa ! stuck
 like the horn of a bull
 Just on a mountain's edge as bare as
 the creature's skull,
 Save a mere shag of a bush with
 hardly a leaf to pull !
 —I scratch my own, sometimes, to
 see if the hair's turned wool.

IV

But the city, oh the city—the square
 with the houses ! Why ?
 They are stone-faced, white as a curd,
 there's something to take the
 eye !
 Houses in four straight lines, not a
 single front awry !

UP AT A VILLA DOWN IN THE CITY 503

You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

V

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by right;
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:

You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint grey olive trees.

VI

Is it better in May, I ask you? you've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns!
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell,
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

VII

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in the conch fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is one weed round her waist in a sort of sash!

VIII

All the year long at the villa, nothing's to see though you linger.
Except yon cypress that looks like Death's lean lifted forefinger.

Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix in the corn and mingle;
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a tangle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous fir on the hill.
Enough of the seasons, I spare you the months of the fever and cold.

IX

Ere opening your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off, than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero,
“And moreover,” (the sonnet goes rhyming,) “the skirts of St. Paul has reached.
Having preached us those six Lent lectures more unctuous than ever he preached.”
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles and seven swords stuck in her heart!

Bang, whang, whang, goes the drum,
tootle-te-tootle the fife;
 No keeping one's haunches still: it's
 the greatest pleasure in life.

X

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear!
 fowls, wine, at double the rate,
 They have clapped a new tax upon
 salt, and what oil pays passing
 the gate
 It's a horror to think of. And so,
 the villa for me, not the city!
 Beggars can scarcely be choosers—
 but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
 Look, two and two go the priests,
 then the monks with cowls and
 sandals,
 And the penitents dressed in white
 shirts, a-holding the yellow
 candles.
 One, he carries a flag up straight,
 and another a cross with handles,
 And the Duke's guard brings up the
 rear, for the better prevention of
 scandals.
Bang, whang, whang, goes the drum,
tootle-te-tootle the life.
 Oh, a day in the city-square, there is
 no such pleasure in life!

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

I

LET's contend no more, Love,
 Strive nor weep—
 All be as before, Love,
 —Only sleep!

II

What so wild as words are I
 I and thou
 In debate, as birds are,
 Hawk on bough!

III

See the creature stalking
 While we speak—
 Hush and hide the talking,
 Cheek on cheek!

IV

What so false as truth is,
 False to thee?
 Where the serpent's tooth is,
 Shun the tree—

V

Where the apple reddens
 Never pry—
 Lest we lose our Edens,
 Eve and I!

VI

Be a god and hold me
 With a charm—
 Be a man and fold me
 With thine arm!

VII

Teach me, only teach, Love!
 As I ought
 I will speak thy speech, Love,
 Think thy thought—

VIII

Meet, if thou require it,
 Both demands,
 Laying flesh and spirit
 In thy hands!

IX

That shall be to-morrow
 Not to-night:
 I must bury sorrow
 Out of sight.

X

—Must a little weep, Love,
 —Foolish me!
 And so fall asleep, Love,
 Loved by thee.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your
 leave!
 You need not clap your torches to
 my face.

Zooks, what's to blame? you think
 you see a monk!
 What, it's past midnight, and you go
 the rounds,
 And here you catch me at an alley's
 end
 Where sportive ladies leave their
 doors ajar.
 The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it
 up,
 Do,—harry out, if you must show
 your zeal,
 Whatever rat, there, haps on his
 wrong hole,
 And nip each softling of a wee white
 mouse,
 Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him
 company!
 Aha, you know your betters? Then,
 you'll take
 Your hand away that's fiddling on
 my throat,
 And please to know me likewise.
 Who am I?
 Why, one, sir, who is lodging with
 a friend
 Three streets off—he's a certain . . .
 how d'ye call?
 Master—a . . . Cosimo of the
 Medici,
 In the house that caps the corner.
 Boh! you were best!
 Remember and tell me, the day you're
 hanged,
 How you affected such a gullet's-
 gripe!
 But you, sir, it concerns you that
 your knaves
 Pick up a manner nor discredit you.
 Zooks, are we pilchards, that they
 sweep the streets
 And count fair prize what comes into
 their net?
 He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
 Just such a face! why, sir, you make
 amends.
 Lord! I'm not angry! Bid your
 hangdogs go
 Drink out this quarter-florin to the
 health
 Of the munificent House that harbours
 me

(And many more beside, lads! more
 beside!)
 And all's come square again. I'd
 like his face—
 His, elbowing on his comrade in the
 door
 With the pike and lantern,—for the
 slave that holds
 John Baptist's head a-dangle by the
 hair
 With one hand ("look you, now," as
 who should say)
 And his weapon in the other, yet
 unwiped!
 It's not your chance to have a bit
 of chalk,
 A wood-coal or the like? or you
 should see!
 Yes, I'm the painter, since you style
 me so.
 What, brother Lippo's doings, up and
 down,
 You know them and they take you?
 like enough!
 I saw the proper twinkle in your
 eye—
 'Tell you I liked your looks at very
 first.
 Let's sit and set things straight now,
 hip to haunch.
 Here's spring come, and the nights
 one makes up bands
 To roam the town and sing out
 carnival,
 And I've been three weeks shut
 within my mew,
 A-painting for the great man, saints
 and saints
 And saints again. I could not paint
 all night—
 Ouf! I leaned out of window for
 fresh air.
 There came a hurry of feet and little
 feet,
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and
 whiffs of song,—
Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a
 tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good's in life
 since?

Flower o' the thyme—and so on.
 Round they went.
 Scarce had they turned the corner
 when a titter,
 Like the skipping of rabbits by moon-
 light—three slim shapes—
 And a face that looked up . . .
 zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
 That's all I'm made of! Into shreds
 it went,
 Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
 All the bed furniture—a dozen knots,
 There was a ladder! down I let
 myself,
 Hands and feet, scrambling somehow,
 and so dropped,
 And after them. I came up with
 the fun
 Hard by St. Laurence, hail fellow,
 well met.—
Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who
knows?
 And so as I was stealing back again
 To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
 Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
 On Jerome knocking at his poor old
 breast
 With his great round stone to subdue
 the flesh,
 You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I
 see!
 Though your eye twinkles still, you
 shake your head—
 Mine's shaved,—a monk, you say
 —the sting's in that!
 If Master Cosimo announced himself,
 Mum's the word naturally; but a
 monk!
 Come, what am I a beast for? tell
 us, now!
 I was a baby when my mother died
 And father died and left me in the street.
 I starved there, God knows how, a
 year or two
 On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds
 and shucks,
 Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty
 day
 My stomach being empty as your hat,
 The wind doubled me up and down
 I went.

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with
 one hand,
 (Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
 And so along the wall, over the
 bridge,
 By the straight cut to the convent.
 Six words, there,
 While I stood munching my first
 bread that month:
 "So, boy, you're minded," quoth the
 good fat father
 Wiping his own mouth, 'twas re-
 fecti-on-time,—
 "To quit this very miserable world?
 Will you renounce" . . . The
 mouthful of bread? thought I;
 By no means! Brief, they made a
 monk of me;
 I did renounce the world, its pride
 and greed,
 Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-
 house,
 Trash, such as these poor devils of
 Medici
 Have given their hearts to—all at
 eight years old.
 Well, sir, I found in time, you may
 be sure,
 'Twas not for nothing—the good
 bellyful,
 The warm serge and the rope that
 goes all round,
 And day-long blessed idleness beside!
 "Let's see what the urchin's fit for"
 —that came next.
 Not overmuch their way, I must
 confess.
 Such a to-do! they tried me with
 their books.
 Lord, they'd have taught me Latin
 in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, "amo" I
love!
 But, mind you, when a boy starves
 in the streets
 Eight years together, as my fortune
 was,
 Watching folk's faces to know who
 will fling
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch
 he desires,

And who will curse or kick him for
his pains—

Which gentleman processional and
fine,

Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and
catch

The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him
whipped,—

How say I?—nay, which dog bites,
which lets drop

His bone from the heap of offal in the
street!

—The soul and sense of him grow
sharp alike,

He learns the look of things, and none
the less

For admonitions from the hunger-
pinch.

I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned
to use:

I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the anti-
phony's marge,

Joined legs and arms to the long
music-notes,

Found nose and eyes and chin for A's
and B's,

And made a string of pictures of the
world

Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and
noun,

On the wall, the bench, the door.
The monks looked black.

"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him
out, d'ye say?"

In no wise. Lose a crow and catch
a lark.

What if at last we get our man of
parts,

We Carmelites, like those Camal-
dolese

And Preaching Friars, to do our
church up fine

And put the front on it that ought to
be!"

And hereupon they bade me daub
away.

Thank you! my head being crammed,
their walls a blank,

Never was such prompt disemburden-
ing.

First, every sort of monk, the black
and white,

I drew them, fat and lean: then folks
at church,

From good old gossips waiting to
confess

Their cribs of barrel-droppings,
candle-ends,—

To the breathless fellow at the altar-
foot,

Fresh from his murder, safe and sit-
ting there

With the little children round him in
a row

Of admiration, half for his beard and
half

For that white anger of his victim's
son

Shaking a fist at him with one fierce
arm,

Signing himself with the other because
of Christ

(Whose sad face on the cross sees
only this

After the passion of a thousand
years)

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er
her head

Which the intense eyes looked through,
came at eve

On tip-toe, said a word, dropped in
a loaf,

Her pair of ear-rings and a bunch of
flowers

The brute took growling, prayed, and
then was gone.

I painted all, then cried "'tis ask and
have—

Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the
ladder flat,

And showed my covered bit of cloister-
wall.

The monks closed in a circle and
praised loud

Till checked, (taught what to see and
not to see,

Being simple bodies) "that's the very
man!"

Look at the boy who stoops to pat
the dog!

That woman's like the Prior's niece
 who comes
 To care about his asthma: it's the
 life!"

But there my triumph's straw-fire
 flared and faked—
 Their betters took their turn to see
 and say:

The Prior and the learned pulled a
 face
 And stopped all that in no time.
 "How? what's here?"

Quite from the mark of painting, bless
 us all!

Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the
 true
 As much as pea and pea! it's devil's-
 game!

Your business is not to catch men
 with show,
 With homage to the perishable clay,
 But lift them over it, ignore it
 all,
 Make them forget there's such a thing
 as flesh.

Your business is to paint the souls of
 men—
 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . .
 no it's not . .

It's vapour done up like a new-born
 babe—
 (In that shape when you die it leaves
 your mouth)

It's . . well, what matters talking,
 it's the soul!

Give us no more of body than shows
 soul.

Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising
 God!

That sets you praising,—why not stop
 with him?

Why put all thoughts of praise out of
 our heads

With wonder at lines, colours, and
 what not?

Paint the soul, never mind the legs
 and arms!

Rub all out, try at it a second time.
 Oh, that white smallish female with
 the breasts.

She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I
 would say,

Who went and danced and got men's
 heads cut off—
 Have it all out!" Now, is this sense,
 I ask?

A fine way to paint soul, by painting
 body
 So ill, the eye can't stop there, must
 go further

And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow
 does for white

When what you put for yellow's simply
 black,

And any sort of meaning looks in-
 tense

When all beside itself means and
 looks nought.

Why can't a painter lift each foot in
 turn,

Left foot and right foot, go a double
 step.

Make his flesh liker and his soul more
 like,

Both in their order? Take the
 prettiest face,

The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint
 —is it so pretty

You can't discover if it means hope,
 fear,

Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with
 these?

Suppose I've made her eyes all right
 and blue,

Can't I take breath and try to add
 life's flash,

And then add soul and heighten them
 threefold?

Or say there's beauty with no soul at
 all—

(I never saw it—put the case the
 same—)

If you get simple beauty and nought
 else,

You get about the best thing God
 invents.—

That's somewhat. And you'll find the
 soul you have missed,

Within yourself when you return Him
 thanks!

"Rub all out!" well, well, there's
 my life, in short,

And so the thing has gone on ever
 since.

I'm grown a man no doubt, I've
 broken bounds—
 You should not take a fellow eight
 years old
 And make him swear to never kiss
 the girls—
 I'm my own master, paint now as I
 please—
 Having a friend, you see, in the
 Corner-house !
 Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in
 front—
 Those great rings serve more purposes
 than just
 To plant a flag in, or tie up a
 horse !
 And yet the old schooling sticks—the
 old grave eyes
 Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I
 work,
 The heads shake still—"It's Art's
 decline, my son !
 You're not of the true painters, great
 and old :
 Brother Angelico's the man, you'll
 find :
 Brother Lorenzo stands his single
 peer.
 Fag on at flesh, you'll never make
 the third !"

Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners,
and I'll stick to mine !

I'm not the third, then : bless us, they
 must know !
 Don't you think they're the likeliest
 to know,
 They, with their Latin ? so I swallow
 my rage,
 Clench my teeth, suck my lips in
 tight, and paint
 To please them—sometimes do, and
 sometimes don't,
 For, doing most, there's pretty sure
 to come
 A turn—some warm eve finds me at
 my saints—
 A laugh, a cry, the business of the
 world—
(Flower o' the peach,
Death for us all, and his own life for
each !)

And my whole soul revolves, the cup
 runs o'er,
 The world and life's too big to pass
 for a dream,
 And I do these wild things in sheer
 despite,
 And play the fooleries you catch me at,
 In pure rage ! the old mill-horse, out
 at grass
 After hard years, throws up his stiff
 heels so,
 Although the miller does not preach
 to him
 The only good of grass is to make
 chaff.
 What would men have ? Do they
 like grass or no—
 May they or mayn't they ? all I want's
 the thing
 Settled for ever one way : as it is
 You tell too many lies and hurt
 yourself.
 You don't like what you only like too
 much,
 You do like what, if given you at your
 word,
 You find abundantly detestable.
 For me, I think I speak as I was
 taught—
 I always see the Garden and God
 there
 A-making man's wife—and, my lesson
 learned,
 The value and significance of flesh,
 I can't unlearn ten minutes after-
 ward.

You understand me : I'm a beast,
 I know.
 But see, now—why, I see as certainly
 As that the morning-star's about to
 shine,
 What will hap some day. We've a
 youngster here
 Comes to our convent, studies what I
 do,
 Slouches and stares and lets no atom
 drop—
 His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the
 monks—
 They call him Hulking Tom, he lets
 them talk—

He picks my practice up—he'll paint
 apace,
 I hope so—though I never live so long,
 I know what's sure to follow. You
 be judge!
 You speak no Latin more than I,
 belike
 However, you're my man, you've seen
 the world
 The beauty and the wonder and the
 power,
 The shapes of things, their colours,
 lights and shades,
 Changes, surprises,—and God made
 it all!
 For what? do you feel thankful,
 ay or no,
 For this fair town's face, yonder river's
 line,
 The mountain round it and the sky
 above,
 Much more the figures of man, woman,
 child,
 These are the frame to? What's it
 all about?
 To be passed o'er, despised? or dwelt
 upon,
 Wondered at? oh, this last of course,
 you say.
 But why not do as well as say,—paint
 these
 Just as they are, careless what
 comes of it?
 God's works—paint anyone, and
 count it crime
 To let a truth slip. Don't object,
 "His works
 Are here already—nature is complete:
 Suppose you reproduce her—(which
 you can't)
 There's no advantage! you must beat
 her, then."
 For, don't you mark, we're made so
 that we love
 First when we see them painted,
 things we have passed
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to
 see:
 And so they are better, painted—
 better to us,
 Which is the same thing. Art was
 given for that—

God uses us to help each other so,
 Lending our minds out. Have you
 noticed, now,
 Your cullion's hanging face? A bit
 of chalk,
 And trust me but you should though!
 How much more,
 If I drew higher things with the same
 truth!
 That were to take the Prior's pulpit-
 place,
 Interpret God to all of you! oh, oh,
 It makes me mad to see what men
 shall do
 And we in our graves! This world's
 no blot for us,
 Nor blank—it means intensely, and
 means good:
 To find its meaning in my meat and
 drink.
 "Ay, but you don't so instigate to
 prayer,"
 Strikes in the Prior! "when your
 meaning's plain
 It does not say to folks—remember
 matins—
 Or, mind you fast next Friday."
 Why, for this
 What need of art at all? A skull and
 bones,
 Two bits of stick nailed cross-wise,
 or, what's best,
 A bell to chime the hour with, does
 as well.
 I painted a St. Laurence six months
 since
 At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine
 style.
 "How looks my painting, now the
 scaffold's down?"
 I ask a brother: "Hugely," he
 returns—
 "Already not one phiz of your three
 slaves
 That turn the Deacon off his toasted
 side,
 But's scratched and prodded to our
 heart's content,
 The pious people have so eased their
 own
 When coming to say prayers there in
 a rage.

We get on fast to see the bricks
 beneath.
 Expect another job this time next
 year,
 For pity and religion grow i' the
 crowd—
 Your painting serves its purpose ! ”
 Hang the fools !
 —That is—you'll not mistake an idle
 word
 Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God
 wot,
 Tasting the air this spicy night which
 turns
 The unaccustomed head like Chianti
 wine !
 Oh, the church knows ! don't misre-
 port me, now !
 It's natural a poor monk out of
 bounds
 Should have his apt word to excuse
 himself :
 And hearken how I plot to make
 amends.
 I have bethought me ; I shall paint a
 piece
 . . . There's for you ! Give me six
 months, then go, see
 Something in Sant' Ambrogio's . . .
 (bless the nuns !
 They want a cast of my office) I shall
 paint
 God in the midst, Madonna and her
 babe,
 Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-
 brood,
 Lilies and vestments and white faces,
 sweet
 As puff on puff of grated orris-root
 When ladies crowd to church at mid-
 summer.
 And then in the front, of course a
 saint or two—
 Saint John, because he saves the
 Florentines,
 Saint Ambrose, who puts down in
 black and white
 The convent's friends and gives them
 a long day,
 And Job, I must have him there past
 mistake,
 The man of Uz, (and Us without the z,
 Painters who need his patience.)
 Well, all these
 Secured at their devotions, up shall
 come
 Out of a corner when you least
 expect,
 As one by a dark stair into a great
 light,
 Music and talking, who but Lippo !
 I !—
 Mazed, motionless and moonstruck
 —I'm the man !
 Back I shrink—what is this I see and
 hear ?
 I, caught up with my monk's things
 by mistake,
 My old serge gown and rope that
 goes all round,
 I, in this presence, this pure com-
 pany !
 Where's a hole, where's a corner for
 escape ?
 Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a
 thing
 Forward, puts out a soft palm—
 “Not so fast !”
 —Addresses the celestial presence,
 “nay—
 He made you and devised you, after
 all,
 Though he's none of you ! Could
 Saint John there draw—
 His camel-hair make up a painting-
 brush ?
 We come to brother Lippo for all
 that,
Isle perfectit opus !” So, all smile—
 I shuffle sideways with my blushing
 face
 Under the cover of a hundred wings
 Thrown like a spread of kirtles when
 you're gay
 And play hot cockles, all the doors
 being shut,
 Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
 The hothead husband ! Thus I
 scuttle off
 To some safe bench behind, not let-
 ting go
 The palm of her, the little lily thing
 That spoke the good word for me in
 the nick,

Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint
 Lucy, I would say.
 And so all's saved for me, and for the
 church
 A pretty picture gained. Go, six
 months hence!
 Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no
 lights, no lights!
 The street's hushed, and I know my
 own way back—
 Don't fear me! There's the grey
 beginning. Zooks!

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

I

Oh, Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very
 sad to find!
 I can hardly misconceive you; it
 would prove me deaf and blind;
 But although I give you credit, 'tis
 with such a heavy mind!

II

Here you come with your old music,
 and here's all the good it brings.
 What, they lived once thus at Venice,
 where the merchants were the
 kings,
 Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges
 used to wed the sea with rings?

III

Ay, because the sea's the street there;
 and 'tis arched by . . . what
 you call
 . . . Shylock's bridge with houses
 on it, where they kept the
 carnival!
 I was never out of England—it's as if
 I saw it all!

IV

Did young people take their pleasure
 when the sea was warm in May?
 Balls and masks begun at midnight,
 burning ever to mid-day,
 When they made up fresh adventures
 for the morrow, do you say?

V

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so
 round and lips so red,—
 On her neck the small face buoyant,
 like a bell-flower on its bed,
 O'er the breast's superb abundance
 where a man might base his head?

VI

Well (and it was graceful of them)
 they'd break talk off and afford
 — She, to bite her mask's black velvet,
 he to finger on his sword,
 While you sat and played Toccatas,
 stately at the clavichord?

VII

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive,
 sixths diminished sigh on
 sigh,
 Told them something? Those suspensions,
 those solutions—"Must
 we die?"
 Those commiserating sevenths—"Life
 might last! we can but try!"

VIII

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."
 "And are you still as happy?"
 —"Yes—and you?"
 —"Then more kisses"—"Did I stop
 them, when a million seemed so
 few?"
 Hark—the dominant's persistence,
 till it must be answered to!

IX

So an octave struck the answer. Oh,
 they praised you, I dare say!
 "Brave Galuppi! that was music!
 good alike at grave and gay!
 I can always leave off talking, when
 I hear a master play."

X

Then they left you for their pleasure:
 till in due time, one by one,
 Some with lives that came to nothing,
 some with deeds as well undone,
 Death came tacitly and took them
 where they never see the sun.

XI

But when I sit down to reason,—think
to take my stand nor swerve
Till I triumph o'er a secret wrung
from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music,
till I creep thro' every nerve.

XII

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creak-
ing where a house was burned—
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with,
Venice spent what Venice
earned !
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—
where a soul can be discerned.

XIII

"Yours for instance, you know
physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime ; souls
shall rise in their degree ;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—
you'll not die, it cannot be !

XIV

"As for Venice and its people,
merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage,
mirth and folly were the crop,
What of soul was left, I wonder,
when the kissing had to stop ?

XV

"Dust and ashes !" So you creak
it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too
—what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms ?
I feel chilly and grown old.

BY THE FIRE-SIDE

I

How well I know what I mean to do
When the long dark Autumn even-
ings come,
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue ?
With the music of all thy voices,
dumb
In life's November too !

II

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,
O'er a great wise book as besemeth
age,
While the shutters flap as the cross-
wind blows,
And I turn the page, and I turn the
page,
Not verse now, only prose !

III

Till the young ones whisper, finger
on lip,
"There he is at it, deep in Greek—
Now or never, then, out we slip
To cut from the hazels by the creek
A mainmast for our ship."

IV

I shall be at it indeed, my friends !
Greek puts already on either side
Such a branch-work forth, as soon
extends
To a vista opening far and wide,
And I pass out where it ends.

V

The outside frame like your hazel-
trees—
But the inside-archway narrows
fast,
And a rarer sort succeeds to these,
And we slope to Italy at last
And youth, by green degrees.

VI

I follow wherever I am led,
Knowing so well the leader's hand—
Oh, woman - country, wooed, not
wed,
Loved all the more by earth's male-
lands,
Laid to their hearts instead !

VII

Look at the ruined chapel again
Half way up in the Alpine gorge.
Is that a tower, I point you plain,
Or is it a mill or an iron forge
Breaks solitude in vain ?

VIII

A turn, and we stand in the heart of
things ;
The woods are round us, heaped
and dim ;
From slab to slab how it slips and
springs,
The thread of water single and slim,
Thro' the ravage some torrent brings !

IX

Does it feed the little lake below ?
That speck of white just on its
marge
Is Pella: see, in the evening glow
How sharp the silver spear-heads
charge
When Alp meets Heaven in snow.

X

On our other side is the straight-up
rock ;
And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge
and it
By boulder-stones where lichens mock
The marks on a moth, and small
ferns fit
Their teeth to the polished block.

XI

Oh, the sense of the yellow mountain
flowers,
And the thorny balls, each three
in one,
The chestnuts throw on our path in
showers,
For the drop of the woodland fruit's
begun
These early November hours—

XII

That crimson the creeper's leaf across
Like a splash of blood, intense,
abrupt,
O'er a shield, else gold from rim to
boss,
And lay it for show on the fairy-
cupped
Elf-needled mat of moss,

XIII

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, un-
divulged
Last evening—nay, in to-day's first
dew
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged
Where a freaked, fawn-coloured,
flaky crew
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

XIV

And yonder, at foot of the fronting
ridge
That takes the turn to a range
beyond,
Is the chapel reached by the one-
arched bridge
Where the water is stopped in a
stagnant pond
Danced over by the midge.

XV

The chapel and bridge are of stone
alike,
Blackish grey and mostly wet ;
Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow
dyke.
See here again, how the lichens
fret
And the roots of the ivy strike !

XVI

Poor little place, where its one priest
comes
On a festa-day, if he comes at all,
To the dozen folk from their scattered
homes,
Gathered within that precinct small
By the dozen ways one roams

XVII

To drop from the charcoal-burners'
huts,
Or climb from the hemp-dressers'
low shed,
Leave the grange where the woodman
stores his nuts,
Or the wattled cote where the
fowlers spread
Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

XVIII

It has some pretension too, this
front,
With its bit of fresco half-moon-
wise
Set over the porch, art's early wont—
'Tis John in the Desert, I sur-
mise,
But has borne the weather's brunt—

XIX

Not from the fault of the builder,
though,
For a pent-house properly projects
Where three carved beams make a
certain show,
Dating—good thought of our archi-
tect's—
'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

XX

And all day long a bird sings there,
And a stray sheep drinks at the
pond at times:
The place is silent and aware :
It has had its scenes, its joys and
crimes,
But that is its own affair.

XXI

My perfect wife, my Leonor,
Oh, heart my own, oh, eyes, mine
too,
Whom else could I dare look back-
ward for,
With whom beside should I dare
pursue
The path grey heads abhor?

XXII

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge
with them;
Youth, flowery all the way, there
stops—
Not they; age threatens and they
contemn,
Till they reach the gulf wherein
youth drops,
One inch from our life's safe hem !

XXIII

With me, youth led—I will speak now,
No longer watch you as you sit
Reading by fire-light, that great brow
And the spirit-small hand prop-
ping it
Mutely—my heart knows how—

XXIV

When, if I think but deep enough,
You are wont to answer, prompt
as rhyme ;
And you, too, find without a rebuff
The response your soul seeks many
a time
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff—

XXV

My own, confirm me ! If I tread
This path back, is it not in pride
To think how little I dreamed it led
To an age so blest that by its side
Youth seems the waste instead !

XXVI

My own, see where the years conduct !
At first, 'twas something our two
souls
Should mix as mists do : each is
sucked
Into each now ; on, the new stream
rolls,
Whatever rocks obstruct.

XXVII

Think, when our one soul understands
The great Word which makes all
things new—
When earth breaks up and Heaven
expands—
How will the change strike me and
you
In the House not made with hands?

XXVIII

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt
mine,
Your heart anticipate my heart,
You must be just before, in fine,
See and make me see, for your part.
New depths of the Divine !

XXIX

But who could have expected this,
 When we two drew together first
 Just for the obvious human bliss,
 To satisfy life's daily thirst
 With a thing men seldom miss?

XXX

Come back with me to the first of all.
 Let us lean and love it over
 again —
 Let us now forget and then recall,
 Break the rosary in a pearly rain,
 And gather what we let fall !

XXXI

What did I say?—that a small bird
 sings
 All day long, save when a brown
 pair
 Of hawks from the wood float with
 wide wings
 Strained to a bell : 'gainst the noon-
 day glare
 You count the streaks and rings.

XXXII

But at afternoon or almost eve
 'Tis better ; then the silence grows
 To that degree, you half believe
 It must get rid of what it knows,
 Its bosom does so heave.

XXXIII

Hither we walked, then, side by side,
 Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,
 And still I questioned or replied
 While my heart, convulsed to really
 speak,
 Lay choking in its pride.

XXXIV

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,
 And pity and praise the chapel
 sweet,
 And care about the fresco's loss,
 And wish for our souls a like re-
 treat,
 And wonder at the moss.

XXXV

Stoop and kneel on the settle under—
 Look through the window's grated
 square :
 Nothing to see ! for fear of plunder,
 The cross is down and the altar
 bare,
 As if thieves don't fear thunder.

XXXVI

We stoop and look in through the
 grate,
 See the little porch and rustic
 door,
 Read duly the dead builder's date,
 Then cross the bridge we crossed
 before,
 Take the path again—but wait !

XXXVII

Oh moment, one and infinite !
 The water slips o'er stock and
 stone ;
 The west is tender, hardly bright.
 How grey at once is the evening
 grown—
 One star, the chrysolite !

XXXVIII

We two stood there with never a
 third,
 But each by each, as each knew
 well,
 The sights we saw and the sounds
 we heard,
 The lights and the shades made up
 a spell
 Till the trouble grew and stirred.

XXXIX

Oh, the little more, and how much
 it is !
 And the little less, and what worlds
 away !
 How a sound shall quicken content
 to bliss,
 Or a breath suspend the blood's
 best play,
 And life be a proof of this !

X

Had she willed it, still had stood the
So slight, so sure, 'twist my love
and I
I could fix her face with a glance
betwixt
And find her soul as when friend
counter,
Friends—lovers that might have been.

XII

For my heart had a touch of the
woodland time,
Wanting to sleep now over its best
Shake the whole tree in the summer-
prime,
But bring to the last leaf no such
test.
"Hold the last fast!" says the
rhyme.

XIII

For a chance to make your little
much,
To gain a lover and lose a friend,
Venture the tree and a myriad such,
When nothing you mar but the
year can mend!
But a last leaf—fear to touch.

XLIH

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall
Eddying down till it find your
face
At some slight wind—(best chance
of all!)
Be your heart henceforth its dwell-
ing-place
You trembled to forestal!

XLIV

Worth how well, those dark grey
eyes,
—That hair so dark and dear, how
worth
That a man should strive and agonise,
And taste a very hell on earth
For the hope of such a prize!

XLV

Oh, you might have turned and tried
a man,
Set him a space to weary and wear,
And prove which suited more your
plan.
His best of hope or his worst
despair,
Yet end as he began.

XLVI

But you spared me this, like the heart
you are,
And filled my empty heart at a
word.
If you join two lives, there is oft a
scar,
They are one and one, with a
shadowy third;
One near one is too far.

XLVII

A moment after, and hands unseen
Were hanging the night around us
fast.
But we knew that a bar was broken
between
Life and life; we were mixed at
last
In spite of the mortal screen.

XLVIII

The forests had done it; there they
stood—
We caught for a second the powers
at play:
They had mingled us so, for once and
for good,
Their work was done—we might
go or stay,
They relapsed to their ancient mood.

XLIX

How the world is made for each of us!
How all we perceive and know
in it
Tends to some moment's product thus,
When a soul declares itself—to wit
By its fruit—the thing it does!

I.

Be I hate that fruit or Love that fruit,
 It forwards the General Deed of
 Man,
 And each of the Many helps to re-
 cruit
 The life of the race by a general
 plan,
 Each living his own, to boot.

I.I

I am named and known by that hour's
 feat,
 There took my station and degree.
 So grew my own small life complete
 As nature obtained her best of me—
 One born to love you, sweet !

I.II

And to watch you sink by the fire-side
 now
 Back again, as you mutely sit
 Musing by the fire-light, that great
 brow
 And the spirit-small hand prop-
 ping it
 Vonder, my heart knows how !

I.III

So the earth has gained by one man
 more,
 And the gain of earth must be
 Heaven's gain too,
 And the whole is well worth thinking
 o'er
 When the autumn comes : which I
 mean to do
 One day, as I said before.

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND

I

My love, this is the bitterest, that
 thou
 Who art all truth and who dost love
 me now
 As thine eyes say, as thy voice
 breaks to say—

Should'st love so truly and could'st
 love me still
 A whole long life through, had but
 love its will,
 Would death that leads me from
 thee brook delay !

II

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand
 Would never let mine go, thy heart
 withstand
 The beating of my heart to reach its
 place.
 When should I look for thee and
 feel thee gone ?
 When cry for the old comfort and
 find none ?
 Never, I know ! Thy soul is in thy
 face.

III

Oh, I should fade—'tis willed so !
 might I save,
 Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave
 Joy to thy sense, for that was
 precious too.
 It is not to be granted. But the soul
 Whence the love comes, all ravage
 leaves that whole ;
 Vainly the flesh fades—soul makes
 all things new.

IV

And 'twould not be because my eye
 grew dim
 Thou could'st not find the love there,
 thanks to Him
 Who never is dishonoured in the
 spark
 He gave us from his fire of fires, and
 bade
 Remember whence it sprang nor be
 afraid
 While that burns on, though all the
 rest grow dark.

V

So, how thou would'st be perfect,
 white and clean
 Outside as inside, soul and soul's
 demesne
 Alike, this body given to show it by !

Oh, three-parts through the worst of
 life's abyss,
 What plaudits from the next world
 after this,
 Could'st thou repeat a stroke and
 gain the sky !

VI

And is it not the bitterer to think
 That, disengage our hands and thou
 wilt sink
 Although thy love was love in very
 deed?
 I know that nature! Pass a festive day,
 Thou dost not throw its relic-flower
 away
 Nor bid its music's loitering echo
 speed.

VII

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie
 where it fell;
 If old things remain old things all is
 well,
 Forthou art grateful as becomes man
 best:
 And hadst thou only heard me play
 one tune,
 Or viewed me from a window, not so
 soon
 With thee would such things fade as
 with the rest.

VIII

I seem to see! we meet and part:
 'tis brief:
 The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,
 The very chair I sat on, breaks the
 rank:
 That is a portrait of me on the wall—
 Three lines, my face comes at so
 slight a call;
 And for all this, one little hour's to
 thank.

IX

But now, because the hour through
 years was fixed,
 Because our inmost beings met and
 mixed,
 Because thou once hast loved me—
 wilt thou dare

Say to thy soul and Who may list
 beside,
 "Therefore she is immortally my
 bride,
 Chance cannot change that love, nor
 time impair.

X

"So, what if in the dusk of life that's
 left,
 I, a tired traveller, of my sun bereft,
 Look from my path when, mimicking
 the same,
 The fire-fly glimp-es past me, come
 and gone?
 —Where was it till the sunset? where
 anon
 It will be at the sunrise! what's to
 blame?"

XI

Is it so helpful to thee? canst thou take
 The mimic up, nor, for the true
 thing's sake,
 Put gent! by such efforts at a beam?
 Is the remainder of the way so long
 Thou need'st the little solace, thou
 the strong?
 Watch out thy watch, let weak ones
 doze and dream!

XII

"—Ah, but the fresher faces! Is it
 true,"
 Thou'lt ask, "some eyes are beautiful
 and new?
 Some hair,—how can one choose
 but grasp such wealth?
 And if a man would press his lips to
 lips
 Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup
 there slips
 The dew-drop out of, must it be by
 stealth?"

XIII

"It cannot change the love kept still
 for Her,
 Much more than, such a picture to
 prefer
 Passing a day with, to a room's
 bare side.

The painted form takes nothing she
possessed,
Yet while the Titian's Venus lies at
rest
A man looks. Once more, what is
there to chide?"

XIV

So must I see, from where I sit and
watch.
My own self sell myself, my hand
attach
Its warrant to the very thefts from
me—
Thy singleness of soul that made me
proud,
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,
Thy man's truth I was bold to bid
God see!

XV

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all
thou canst
Away to the new faces—disen-
tranced—
(Say it and think it) obdurate no
more,
Re-issue looks and words from the
old mint—
Pass them afresh, no matter whose
the print
Image and superscription once they
bore!

XVI

Re-coin thyself and give it them to
spend,—
It all comes to the same thing at the
end,
Since mine thou wast, mine art,
and mine shalt be,
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the
sum
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must
come
Back to the heart's place here I keep
for thee!

XVII

Only, why should it be with stain at
all?
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of
coronal.
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?

Why need the other women know so
much
And talk together, "Such the look
and such
The smile he used to love with,
then as now!"

XVIII

Might I die last and shew thee!
Should I find
Such hardship in the few years left
behind,
If free to take and light my lamp,
and go
Into thy tomb, and shut the door and
sit
Seeing thy face on those four sides of it
The better that they are so blank,
I know!

XIX

Why, time was what I wanted, to
turn o'er
Within my mind each look, get more
and more
By heart each word, too much to
learn at first.
And join thee all the fitter for the
pause
'Neath the low doorway's lintel.
That were cause
For lingering, though thou calledst,
if I durst!

XX

And yet thou art the nobler of us two.
What dare I dream of, that thou
canst not do,
Outstripping my ten small steps
with one stride?
I'll say then, here's a trial and a
task—
Is it to bear?—if easy, I'll not ask—
Though love fail, I can trust on in
thy pride.

XXI

Pride?—when those eyes forestal the
life behind
The death I have to go through!—
when I find,
Now that I want thy help most,
all of thee!

What did I fear? Thy love shall
hold me fast
Until the little minute's sleep is past
And I wake saved.—And yet, it
will not be!

AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL
EXPERIENCE OF KARSHISH,
THE ARAB PHYSICIAN

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's
crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handi-
work
(This man's-flesh He hath admirably
made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a
paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth
a space
That puff of vapour from His mouth,
man's soul)
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I
boast.
Like me inquisitive how pricks and
cracks
Befall the flesh through too much
stress and strain,
Whereby the wily vapour fain would
slip
Back and rejoin its source before the
term,—
And aptest in contrivance, under
God.
To baffle it by deftly stopping such :—
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at
home
Sends greeting (health and know-
ledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone—
rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-
shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms
than drugs)
And writeth now the twenty-second
time.

My journeyings were brought to
Jericho,
Thus I resume. Who studious in
our art
Shall count a little labour unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh
and bone
On many a flinty furlong of this land.
Also the country-side is all on fire
With rumours of a marching hither-
ward—
Some say Vespasian cometh, some,
his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a
tufted ear ;
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow
balls :
I cried and threw my staff and he
was gone.
Twice have the robbers stripped and
beaten me,
And once a town declared me for
a spy,
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
Since this poor covert where I pass
the night,
This Bethany, lies scarce the distance
thence
A man with plague-sores at the third
degree
Runs till he drops down dead. Thou
laughest here !
'Sooth, it clates me, thus reposed and
safe,
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip
And share with thee whatever Jewry
yields.
A viscid choler is observable
In tertians, I was nearly bold to
say,
And falling-sickness hath a happier
cure
Than our school wots of: there's a
spider here
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge
of tombs,
Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-
grey back ;
Take five and drop them . . . but
who knows his mind,
The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to?
His service payeth me a sublimate

Blown up his nose to help the ailing
eye.
Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,
There set in order my experiences,
Gather what most deserves and give
thee all—
Or I might add, Judea's gum-tra-
gacanth
Scales off in purer flakes, shines
clearer-grained,
Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the por-
phyry,
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-
disease
Confounds me, crossing so with
leprosy—
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained
at Zoar—
But zeal outruns discretion. Here
I end.

Yet stay: my Syrian blinketh grate-
fully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price—
Suppose I write what harms not,
though he steal?
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness—or
else
The Man had something in the look
of him—
His case has struck me far more than
'tis worth.
So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose
In the great press of novelty at hand
The care and pains this somehow stole
from me)
I bid thee take the thing while fresh
in mind,
Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have
the truth?
The very man is gone from me but now,
Whose ailment is the subject of dis-
course.
Thus then, and let thy better wit
help all.
'Tis but a case of mania—subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point
Of trance prolonged unduly some
three days,

When by the exhibition of some drug
Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art
Unknown to me and which 'twere
well to know,
The evil thing out-breaking all at once
Left the man whole and sound of
body indeed,—
But, flinging, so to speak, life's gates
too wide,
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit that entered pleased
to write
Whatever it was minded on the wall
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served) that nothing
subsequent
Attaineth to erase the fancy-scrawls
Which the returned and new-estab-
lished soul
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by
heart
That henceforth she will read or these
or none.
And first—the man's own firm con-
viction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried
him)
—That he was dead and then restored
to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe:
—'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise,"
and he did rise.
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt
cry.
Not so this figment!—not, that such
a fume,
Instead of giving way to time and
health,
Should eat itself into the life of life,
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones
and all!
For see, how he takes up the after-life.
The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of
age,
The body's habit wholly laudable,
As much, indeed, beyond the common
health
As he were made and put aside to
shew.
Think, could we penetrate by any
drug

And bathe the wearied soul and
 worried flesh,
 And bring it clear and fair, by three
 days' sleep!
 Whence has the man the balm that
 brightens all?
 This grown man eyes world now
 like a child.
 Some elders of his tribe, I should
 premise,
 Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
 To bear my inquisition. While they
 spoke,
 Now sharply, now with sorrow,—
 told the case,—
 He listened not except I spoke to him,
 But folded his two hands and let
 them talk,
 Watching the flies that buzzed: and
 yet no fool.
 And that's a sample how his years
 must go.
 Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
 Should find a treasure, can he use the
 same
 With straightened habits and with
 tastes starved small,
 And take at once to his impoverished
 brain
 The sudden element that changes
 things,
 —That sets the undreamed-of rapture
 at his hand,
 And puts the cheap old joy in the
 scorned dust?
 Is he not such an one as moves to
 mirth—
 Warily parsimonious, when's no need,
 Wasteful as drunkenness at undue
 times?
 All prudent counsel as to what befits
 The golden mean, is lost on such an
 one.
 The man's fantastic will is the man's
 law.
 So here—we'll call the treasure know-
 ledge, say—
 Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—
 Heaven opened to a soul while yet on
 earth,
 Earth forced on a soul's use while
 seeing Heaven.

The man is witless of the size, the sum,
 The value in proportion of all things,
 Or whether it be little or be much.
 Discourse to him of prodigious arma-
 ments
 Assembled to besiege his city now,
 And of the passing of a mule with
 gourds—
 'Tis one! Then take it on the other
 side,
 Speak of some trifling fact—he will
 gaze rapt
 With stupor at its very littleness—
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed
 He caught prodigious import, whole
 results;
 And so will turn to us the bystanders
 In ever the same stupor (note this
 point)
 That we too see not with his opened
 eyes!
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into
 play,
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.
 Should his child sicken unto death,—
 why, look
 For scarce abatement of his cheerful-
 ness,
 Or pretermission of his daily craft—
 While a word, gesture, glance, from
 that same child.
 At play or in the school or laid asleep,
 Will start him to an agony of fear,
 Exasperation, just as like! demand
 The reason why—" 'tis but a word,"
 object—
 "A gesture"—he regards thee as our
 lord
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
 Looked at us, dost thou mind, when
 being young
 We both would unadvisedly recite
 Some charm's beginning, from that
 book of his,
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and
 burst
 All into stars, as suns grown old are
 wont.
 Thou and the child have each a veil
 alike
 Thrown o'er your heads from under
 which ye both

Stretch your blind hands and trifle
 with a match
 Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye
 know !
 He holds on firmly to some thread of
 life —
 (It is the life to lead perforcedly)
 Which runs across some vast distract-
 ing orb
 Of glory on either side that meagre
 thread,
 Which, conscious of, he must not
 enter yet —
 The spiritual life around the earthly
 life !
 The law of that is known to him as
 this—
 His heart and brain move there, his
 feet stay here.
 So is the man perplex with impulses
 Sudden to start off crosswise, not
 straight on,
 Proclaiming what is Right and Wrong
 across—
 And not along—this black thread
 through the blaze—
 "It should be" balked by "here it
 cannot be."
 And oft the man's soul springs into
 his face
 As if he saw again and heard again
 His sage that bade him "Rise" and
 he did rise.
 Something—a word, a tick of the
 blood within
 Admonishes—then back he sinks at
 once
 To ashes, that was very fire before,
 In sedulous recurrence to his trade
 Whereby he earneth him the daily
 bread—
 And studiously the humbler for that
 pride,
 Professedly the faultier that he knows
 God's secret, while he holds the
 thread of life.
 Indeed the especial marking of the
 man
 Is prone submission to the Heavenly
 will—
 Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
 'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last

For that same death which will re-
 store his being
 To equilibrium, body loosening soul
 Divorced even now by premature full
 growth :
 He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to
 live
 So long as God please, and just how
 God please.
 He even seeketh not to please God
 more
 (Which meaneth, otherwise) than as
 God please.
 Hence I perceive not he affects to
 preach
 The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be—
 Make proselytes as madmen thirst to
 do.
 How can he give his neighbour the
 real ground,
 His own conviction? ardent as he is—
 Call his great truth a lie, why still the
 old
 "Be it as God please" reassureth him.
 I probed the sore as thy disciple
 should—
 "How, beast," said I, "this stolid
 carelessness
 Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her
 march
 To stamp out like a little spark thy
 town,
 Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at
 once?"
 He merely looked with his large eyes
 on me.
 The man is apathetic, you deduce?
 Contrariwise he loves both old and
 young,
 Able and weak—affects the very brutes
 And birds—how say I? flowers of the
 field—
 As a wise workman recognises tools
 In a master's workshop, loving what
 they make.
 Thus is the man as harmless as a
 lamb :
 Only impatient, let him do his best.
 At ignorance and carelessness and
 sin—
 An indignation which is promptly
 curbed.

As when in certain travels I have
feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived de-
sign,
And happed to hear the land's prac-
titioners
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignor-
ance,
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure—and I must hold
my peace!

Thou wilt object—why have I not
ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the
Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, enquiring at
the source,
Conferring with the frankness that
befits?
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned
leech
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused,—our learning's fate,—of
wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
And creed prodigious as described to
me.
His death which happened when the
earthquake fell
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the
loss
To occult learning in our lord the sage
That lived there in the pyramid alone)
Was wrought by the mad people—
that's their wont—
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous
help—
How could he stop the earthquake?
That's their way!
The other imputations must be lies:
But take one—though I loathe to give
it thee,
In mere respect to any good man's
fame!
(And after all our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad—should we count on
what he says?
Perhaps not—though in writing to a
leech

'Tis well to keep back nothing of a
case.)
This man so cured regards the curer
then,
As—God forgive me—who but God
himself,
Creator and Sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it
awhile!
—'Sayeth that such an One was born
and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread
at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught
I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor
choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself,
in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus
Who saith—but why all this of what
he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things
of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo
sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is
strange!
Thy pardon for this long and tedi-
ous case,
Which, now that I review it, needs
must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth.
Nor I myself discern in what is
writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe indeed this man has touched
me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the wear-
iness
Had wrought upon me first. I met
him thus—
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken
hills
Like an old lion's cheek-teeth. Out
there came
A moon made like a face with certain
spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:

Then a wind rose behind me. So we
met

In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is
writ.

Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian—he may
lose,

Or steal, or give it thee with equal
good.

Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time
and mine,

Till when, once more thy pardon and
farewell !

The very God ! think, Abib ; dost
thou think ?

So, the All-Great, were the All-
Loving too—

So, through the thunder comes a
human voice

Saying, "O heart I made, a heart
beats here !

Face, my hands fashioned, see it in
myself.

Thou hast no power nor may'st con-
ceive of mine,

But love I gave thee, with Myself to
love,

And thou must love me who have died
for thee !"

The madman saith He said so : it is
strange.

MESMERISM

I

ALL I believed is true !

I am able yet

All I want to get

By a method as strange as new ;
Dare I trust the same to you ?

II

If at night, when doors are shut,
And the wood-worm picks,
And the death-watch ticks,
And the bar has a flag of smut,
And a cat's in the water-butt—

III

And the socket floats and flares,
And the house-beams groan,
And a foot unknown
Is surmised on the garret-stairs,
And the locks slip unawares—

IV

And the spider, to serve his ends,
By a sudden thread,
Arms and legs outspread,
On the table's midst descends,
Comes to find, God knows what
friends !—

V

If since eve drew in, I say,
I have sate and brought
(So to speak) my thought
To bear on the woman away,
Till I felt my hair turn grey—

VI

Till I seemed to have and hold
In the vacancy
'Twixt the wall and me,
From the hair-plait's chestnut-gold
To the foot in its muslin fold—

VII

Have and hold, then and there,
Her, from head to foot,
Breathing and mute,
Passive and yet aware,
In the grasp of my steady stare—

VIII

Hold and have, there and then,
All her body and soul
That completes my Whole,
All that women add to men.
In the clutch of my steady ken—

IX

Having and holding, till
I imprint her last
On the void at last
As the sun does whom he will
By the calotypist's skill—

X

Then,—if my heart's strength serve,
And through all and each
Of the veils I reach
To her soul and never swerve,
Knitting an iron nerve—

XI

Commanding that to advance
And inform the shape
Which has made escape
And before my countenance
Answers me glance for glance—

XII

I, still with a gesture fit
Of my hands that best
Do my soul's behest,
Pointing the power from it,
While myself do steadfast sit—

XIII

Steadfast and still the same
On my object bent
While the hands give vent
To my ardour and my aim
And break into very flame—

XIV

Then, I reach, I must believe,
Not her soul in vain,
For to me again
It reaches, and past retrieve
Is wound in the toils I weave—

XV

And must follow as I require,
As befits a thrall,
Bringing flesh and all,
Essence and earth-attire,
To the source of the tractile fire—

XVI

Till the house called hers, not mine,
With a growing weight
Seems to suffocate
If she break not its leaden line
And escape from its close confine—

XVII

Out of doors into the night !
On to the maze
Of the wild wood-ways,
Not turning to left or right
From the pathway, blind with sight—

XVIII

Making thro' rain and wind
O'er the broken shrubs,
'Twixt the stems and stubs,
With a still composed strong mind,
Not a care for the world behind—

XIX

Swifter and still more swift,
As the crowding peace
Doth to joy increase
In the wide blind eyes uplift,
Thro' the darkness and the drift !

XX

While I—to the shape, I too
Feel my soul dilate
Nor a whit abate
And relax not a gesture due
As I see my belief come true —

XXI

For there ! have I drawn or no
Life to that lip?
Do my fingers dip
In a flame which again they throw
On the cheek that breaks a-glow ?

XXII

Ha ! was the hair so first ?
What, unfileted,
Made alive, and spread
Through the void with a rich outburst
Chestnut gold-interspersed !

XXIII

Like the doors of a casket-shrine,
See, on either side,
Her two arms divide
Till the heart betwixt makes sign,
Take me, for I am thine !

XXIV

Now—now—the door is heard !
 Hark ! the stairs and near—
 Nearer—and here—
 Now ! and at call the third
 She enters without a word.

XXV

On doth she march and on
 To the fancied shape —
 It is past escape
 Herself, now—the dream is done
 And the shadow and she are one.

XXVI

First I will pray. Do Thou
 That ownest the soul
 Yet wilt grant controul'
 To another nor disallow
 For a time, restrain me now !

XXVII

I admonish me while I may,
 Not to squander guilt,
 Since require Thou wilt
 At my hand its price one day !
 What the price is, who can say ?

A SERENADE AT THE VILLA

I

THAT was I, you heard last night
 When there rose no moon at all,
 Nor, to pierce the strained and tight
 Tent of heaven, a planet small :
 Life was dead, and so was light.

II

Not a twinkle from the fly,
 Not a glimmer from the worm.
 When the crickets stopped their cry,
 When the owls forbore a term,
 You heard music ; that was I.

III

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,
 Sultrily suspired for proof :
 In at heaven and out again,
 Lightning !—where it broke the
 roof,
 Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.

IV

What they could my words expressed,
 O my love, my all, my one !
 Singing helped the verses best,
 And when singing's best was done,
 To my lute I left the rest.

V

So wore night ; the east was grey,
 White the broad-faced hemlock
 flowers ;
 Soon would come another day ;
 Ere its first of heavy hours
 Found me, I had past away.

VI

What became of all the hopes,
 Words and song and lute as well ?
 Say, this struck you—"When life
 gropes
 Feebly for the path where fell
 Light last on the evening slopes.

VII

"One friend in that path shall be
 To secure my steps from wrong ;
 One to count night day for me,
 Patient through the watches long,
 Serving most with none to see."

VIII

Never say—as something bodes—
 "So the worst has yet a worse !
 When life halts 'neath double loads,
 Better the task-master's curse
 Than such music on the roads !

IX

"When no moon succeeds the sun,
 Nor can pierce the midnight's tent
 Any star, the smallest one,
 While some drops, where lightning
 went,
 Show the final storm begun—

X

"When the fire-fly hides its spot,
 When the garden-voices fail
 In the darkness thick and hot,—
 Shall another voice avail,
 That shape be where those are not ?

XI

"Has some plague a longer lease
Proffering its help uncouth?
Can't one even die in peace?
As one shuts one's eyes on outh,
Is that face the last one sees?"

XII

Oh, how dark your villa was,
Windows fast and obdurate!
How the garden grudged me grass
Where I stood—the iron gate
Ground its teeth to let me pass!

MY STAR

ALL that I know
Of a certain star,
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue,
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the
blue!
Then it stops like a bird,—like a
flower, hangs furred,
They must solace themselves with
the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a
world?
Mine has opened its soul to me;
therefore I love it.

INSTANS TYRANNUS

I

OF the million or two, more or less,
I rule and possess,
One man, for some cause undefined,
Was least to my mind.

II

I struck him, he grovelled of course—
For, what was his force?
I pinned him to earth with my weight
And persistence of hate—

And he lay, would not moan, would
not curse,
As if lots might be worse.

III

"Were the object less mean, would
he stand
At the swing of my hand!
For obscurity helps him and blots
The hole where he scurts."
So I set my five wits on the stretch
To inveigle the wretch.
All in vain! gold and jewels I threw,
Still he couched there perdue.
I tempted his blood and his flesh,
Hid in roses my mesh.
Choicest eates and the flagon's best
spilth
Still he kept to his faith!

IV

Had he kith now or kin, were access
To his heart, if I press—
Just a son or a mother to seize—
No such booty as these!
Were it simply a friend to pursue
'Mid my million or two,
Who could pay me in person or pelf
What he owes me himself,
No! I could not but smile through
my chafe—
For the fellow lay safe
As his mates do, the midge and the
nit,
—Through minuteness, to wit.

V

Then a humour more great took its
place
At the thought of his face,
The droop, the low cares of the mouth,
The trouble uncouth
'Twixt the brows, all that air one is
fain
To put out of its pain—
And, no, I admonished myself.
"Is one mocked by an elf
Is one baffled by toad or by rat?
The gravamen's in that!
How the lion, who crouches to suit
His back to my foot,

Would admire that I stand in de-
bate!
But the Small is the Great
If it vexes you,—that is the thing!
Toad or rat vex the King?
Though I waste half my realm to
unearth
Toad or rat, 'tis well worth!"

VI

So I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, —with never a
break
Ran my fires for his sake;
Over-head, did my thunders com-
bine
With my under-ground mine:
Till I looked from my labour content
To enjoy the event.

VII

When sudden . . . how think ye,
the end?
Did I say "without friend"?
Say rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like
a breast
Where the wretch was safe prest!
Do you see? just my vengeance
complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts,
and prayed!
—So, I was afraid!

A PRETTY WOMAN

I

THAT fawn-skin-dappled hair of
hers,
And the blue eye
Dear and dewy,
And that infantine fresh air of
hers!

II

To think men cannot take you,
Sweet,
And enfold you,
Ay, and hold you.
And so keep you what they make
you, Sweet!

III

You like us for a glance, you know—
For a word's sake,
Or a sword's sake,
All's the same, whate'er the chance,
you know.

IV

And in turn we make you ours, we
say—
You and youth too
Eyes and mouth too,
All the face composed of flowers, we
say.

V

All's our own, to make the most of,
Sweet—
Sing and say for,
Watch and pray for,
Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet.

VI

But for loving, why, you would not,
Sweet,
Though we prayed you,
Paid you, brayed you
In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet.

VII

So, we leave the sweet face fondly
there -
Be its beauty
Its sole duty!
Let all hope of grace beyond, lie there!

VIII

And while the face lies quiet there,
Who shall wonder
That I ponder
A conclusion? I will try it there.

IX

As,—why must one, for the love for-
gone,
Scout mere liking?
Thunder-striking
Earth,—the heaven, we looked above
for, gone!

X

Why with beauty, needs there money
be—
Love with liking?
Crush the fly-king
In his gauze, because no honey bee?

XI

May not liking be so simple-sweet,
If love grew there
'Twould undo there
All that breaks the cheek to dimples
sweet?

XII

Is the creature too imperfect, say?
Would you mend it
And so end it?
Since not all addition perfects aye!

XIII

Or is it of its kind, perhaps,
Just perfection—
Whence, rejection
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps?

XIV

Shall we burn up, tread that face at
once
Into tinder,
And so hinder
Sparks from kindling all the place at
once?

XV

Or else kiss away one's soul on her?
Your love-fancies!—
A sick man sees
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her!

XVI

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace
the rose,
Plucks a mould-flower
For his gold flower,
Uses fine things that efface the rose

XVII

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose.
Precious metals
Ape the petals,
Last, some old king locks it up,
more!

XVIII

Then, how grace a rose? I know a
way!
Leave it rather.
Must you gather?
Smell, kiss, wear it—at last, throw
away!

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE
DARK TOWER CAME"

(See Edgar's song in "Lear.")

I

My first thought was, he lied in every
word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious
eye
Askance to watch the working of
his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to
afford
Suppression of the glee that pursed
and scored
Its edge at one more victim: gained
thereby.

II

What else should he be set for, with
his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies,
ensnare
All travellers that might find him
posted there,

And ask the road? I guessed what
 skull-like laugh
 Would break, what crutch 'gin write
 my epitaph
 For pastime in the dusty thorough-
 fare,

III

If at his counsel I should turn aside
 Into that ominous tract which, all
 agree,
 Hides the Dark Tower. Yet ac-
 quiescingly
 I did turn as he pointed; neither pride
 Nor hope rekindling at the end de-
 scribed.
 So much as gladness that some end
 should be.

IV

For, what with my whole world-wide
 wandering,
 What with my search drawn out
 thro' years, my hope
 Dwindled into a ghost not fit to
 cope
 With that obstreperous joy success
 would bring,—
 I hardly tried now to rebuke the
 spring
 My heart made, finding failure in
 its scope.

V

As when a sick man very near to death
 Seems dead indeed, and feels begin
 and end
 The tears and takes the farewell of
 each friend
 And hears one bid the other go, draw
 breath
 Freelier outside, ("since all is o'er,"
 he saith,
 "And the blow fall'n no grieving
 can amend").

VI

While some discuss it near the other
 graves
 Be room enough for this, and when
 a day
 Suits best for carrying the corpse
 away,

With care about the banners, scarves
 and staves,
 And still the man hears all, and only
 craves
 He may not shame such tender
 love and stay.

VII

Thus, I had so long suffered in this
 quest,
 Heard failure prophesied so oft,
 been writ
 So many times among "The Band"
 to wit,
 The knights who to the Dark Tower's
 search addressed
 Their steps—that just to fail as they,
 seemed best,
 And all the doubt was now—should
 I be fit?

VIII

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
 That hateful cripple, out of his
 highway
 Into the path he pointed. All the day
 Had been a dreary one at best, and
 dim
 Was settling to its close, yet shot
 one grim
 Red leer to see the plain catch its
 estray.

IX

For mark! no sooner was I fairly
 found
 Pledged to the plain, after a pace
 or two,
 Than pausing to throw backward a
 last view
 To the safe road, 'twas gone! grey
 plain all round!
 Nothing but plain to the horizon's
 bound.
 I might go on; nought else re-
 mained to do.

X

So on I went. I think I never saw
 Such starved ignoble nature; no-
 thing throve:
 For flowers—as well expect a cedar
 grove!

But cockle, spurge, according to their
law
Might propagate their kind, with
none to awe,
You'd think: a burr had been a
treasure-trove.

XI

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the
land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes"—said Nature
peevishly—
"It nothing skills: I cannot help my
case:
The Judgment's fire alone can cure
this place,
Calcine its clods and set my
prisoners free."

XII

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was
chopped—the bents
Were jealous else. What made
those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves—
bruised as to baulk
All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute
must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's
intents.

XIII

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In lepro-y—thin dry blades pricked
the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded
up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone
a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came
there—
Thrust out past service from the
devil's stud!

XIV

Alive? he might be dead for all I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped
neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty
mane.

Seldom were such grotesqueness with
such woe
I never saw a brute I hated so—
He must be wicked to deserve such
pain.

XV

I shut my eyes and turned them on
my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he
fights,
I asked one draught of earlier,
happier sights
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the
soldier's art:
One taste of the old times sets all
to rights!

XVI

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening
face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him
fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas! one night's
disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and
left it cold.

XVII

Giles, then, the soul of honour—there
he stands
Frank as ten years ago when
knighted first.
What honest men should dare (he
said) he durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—laugh!
what hangman's hand
Pin to his breast a parchment? his
own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon
and curst!

XVIII

Better this present than a past like
that—
Back therefore to my darkening
path again.
No sound, no sight as far as eye
could strain.

Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
 I asked: when something on the
 dismal flat
 Came to arrest my thoughts and
 change their train.

XIX

A sudden little river crossed my path
 As unexpected as a serpent comes.
 No sluggish tide congenial to the
 glooms—
 This, as it frothed by, might have been
 a bath
 For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see
 the wrath
 Of its black eddy bespate with flakes
 and spumes.

XX

So petty yet so spiteful! all along,
 Low scrubby alders kneeled down
 over it;
 Drenched willows flung them head-
 long in a fit
 Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
 The river which had done them all
 the wrong,
 Whate'er that was, rolled by, de-
 terred no whit.

XXI

Which, while I forded,—good saints,
 how I feared
 To set my foot upon a dead man's
 cheek,
 Each step, or feel the spear I thrust
 to seek
 For hollows, tangled in his hair or
 beard!
 —It may have been a water-rat I
 speared,
 But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's
 shriek.

XXII

Glad was I when I reached the other
 bank.
 Now for a better country. Vain
 presage!
 Who were the strugglers, what war
 did they wage

Whose savage trample thus could pad
 the dank
 Soil to a plash? toads in a poisoned tank,
 Or wild cats in a red-hot iron
 cage—

XXIII

The fight must so have seemed in that
 fell cirque.
 What kept them there, with all the
 plain to choose?
 No foot-print leading to that horrid
 mews,
 None out of it: mad brewage set to
 work
 Their brains, no doubt, like galley-
 slaves the Turk
 Pits for his pastime, Christians
 against Jews.

XXIV

And more than that—a furlong on—
 why, there!
 What bar' use was that engine for,
 that wheel.
 Or brake, not wheel—that harrow
 fit to reel
 Men's bodies out like silk? with all
 the air
 Of Tophet's tool, on earth left un-
 aware,
 Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth
 of steel.

XXV

Then came a bit of stubbed ground,
 once a wood.
 Next a marsh, it would seem, and
 now mere earth
 Desperate and done with; (so a
 fool finds mirth,
 Makes a thing and then mars it, till
 his mood
 Changes and off he goes!) within a rood
 Bog, clay and rubble, sand and
 stark black dearth.

XXVI

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay
 and grim,
 Now patches where some leanness
 of the soil's
 Broke into moss or substances like
 boils;

Then came some palsied oak, a cleft
in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its
rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it
recoils.

XXVII

And just as far as ever from the end!
Nought in the distance but the
evening, nought
To point my footstep further! At
the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-
friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing
dragon-penned
That brushed my cap--perchance
the guide I sought.

XXVIII

For looking up, aware I somehow
grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had
given place
All round to mountains--with such
name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now
stol'n in view.
How thus they had surprised me,
solve it, you!
How to get from them was no plainer
case.

XXIX

Yet half I seemed to recognise some
trick
Of mischief happened to me, God
knows when--
In a bad dream perhaps. Here
ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the
very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a
click
As when a trap shuts--you're inside
the den!

XXX

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills
on the right
Crouched like two bulls locked
horn in horn in fight--

While to the left, a tall scalped
mountain . . . Duncce,
Fool, to be dozing at the very nonce.
After a life spent training for the
sight!

XXXI

What in the midst lay but the Tower
itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the
fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a
counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's
mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen
shelf
He strikes on, only when the
timbers start.

XXXII

Not see? because of night perhaps?
--Why, day
Came back again for that! before
it left,
The dying sunset kindled through
a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay--
Chin upon hand, to see the game at
bay--
"Now stab and end the creature--
to the heft!"

XXXIII

Not hear? when noise was every-
where? it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in
my ears.
Of all the lost adventurers my
peers--
How such a one was strong, and such
was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled
the woe of years.

XXXIV

There they stood, ranged along the
hill-sides--met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet
of flame

I saw them and I knew them all.
 And yet
 Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I
 set
 And blew. "*Childe Roland to the
 Dark Tower came.*"

RESPECTABILITY

I

DEAR, had the world in its caprice
 Deigned to proclaim "I know you
 both,
 Have recognised your plighted
 troth,
 Am sponsor for you—live in
 peace!"—
 How many precious months and years
 Of youth had passed, that speed so
 fast,
 Before we found it out at last.
 The world, and what it fears?

II

How much of priceless life were
 spent
 With men that every virtue decks.
 And women models of their sex.
 Society's true ornament,—
 Ere we dared wander, nights like
 this,
 Thro' wind and rain, and watch
 the Seine,
 And feel the Boulevard break again
 To warmth and light and bliss?

III

I know! the world proscribes not
 love:
 Allows my finger to caress
 Your lip's contour and downiness,
 Provided it supply a glove.
 The world's good word!—the Insti-
 tute!
 Guizot receives Montalembert!
 Eh? down the court three lampions
 flare—
 Put forward your best foot!

A LIGHT WOMAN

I

So far as our story approaches the end,
 Which do you pity the most of us
 three?—
 My friend, or the mistress of my friend
 With her wanton eyes, or me?

II

My friend was already too good to
 lose,
 And seemed in the way of improve-
 ment yet,
 When she crossed his path with her
 hunting-noose
 And over him drew her net.

III

When I saw him tangled in her toils,
 A shame, said I, if she adds just
 him
 To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
 The hundredth, for a whim!

IV

And before my friend be wholly hers,
 How easy to prove to him, I said.
 An eagle's the game her pride prefers.
 Though she snaps at the wren in-
 stead!

V

So I gave her eyes my own eyes to
 take,
 My hand sought hers as in earnest
 need,
 And round she turned for my noble
 sake,
 And gave me herself indeed.

VI

The eagle am I, with my fame in the
 world.
 The wren is he, with his maiden
 face.
 —You look away and your lip is
 curled?
 Patience, a moment's space!

VII

For see—my friend goes shaking and
white ;
He eyes me as the basilisk :
I have turned, it appears, h's day to
night,
Eclipsing his sun's disc.

VIII

And I did it, he thinks, as a very
thief ;
" Though I love her—that he com-
prehends—
One should master one's passions,
(love, in chief)
And be loyal to one's friends ! "

IX

And she,—she lies in my hand as tame
As a pear hung basking over a wall ;
Just a touch to try and off it came ;
'Tis mine,—can I let it fall ?

X

With no mind to eat it, that's the
worst !
Were it thrown in the road, would
the case assist ?
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies'
thirst
When I gave its stalk a twist.

XI

And I,—what I seem to my friend,
you see—
What I soon shall seem to his love,
you guess.
What I seem to myself, do you ask
of me ?
No hero, I confess.

XII

'Tis an awkward thing to play with
souls,
And matter enough to save one's
own.
Yet think of my friend, and the burn-
ing coals
He played with for bits of stone !

XIII

One likes to show the truth for the
truth ;
That the woman was light is very
true :
But suppose she says,—never mind
that youth—
What wrong have I done to you ?

XIV

Well, any how, here the story stays,
So far at least as I understand ;
And, Robert Browning, you writer of
plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand !

THE STATUE AND THE
BUST

THERE'S a palace in Florence, the
world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the
square,
And this story of both do the towns-
men tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the
east
Asked, " Who rides by with the
royal air ? "

The brides-maids' prattle around her
ceased ;
She leaned forth, one on either hand ;
They saw how the blush of the bride
increased—

They felt by its beats her heart ex-
pand—
As one at each ear and both in a
breath
Whispered, " The Great-Duke Fer-
dinand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless
sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back—"Who
is she?"

"A Bride the Riccardi brings home
to-day."

air in heaps laid heavily
er a pale brow spirit-pure—
rved like the heart of the coal-black
tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure
Which vainly sought to dissemble her
eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's em-
prise
Filled the one empty sheath of a
mar
The Duke drew straightway brav-
and w.

He looked at her, as a lover and
looked at him, as a man
awakes.
The past was a sleep, and
began.

As love so ordered for be-
sakes,
A feast was held that self-same ni-
In the pile which the night shad-
makes.

(For Via Larga is three-
But the Palace overshadowed one,
Because of a crime which may
requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was
done,
Through the first republic's murder
there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in
the square)
Turned in the midst of his multi-
tude
At the bright approach of the bridal
pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man
subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the
floor—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss
conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a
word?
If a word did pass, which I do not
think,
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's
brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was
shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and
sur,
Through a certain window facing the
east
She might watch like a convent's
conicler.

Since passing the door might lead to
east,
East might lead to so much
de,
Of many evils, chose the least.

"Nely I choose too," said the
bride—
"Your window and its world suffice."
So replied the tongue, while the heart
replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil
twice,
May his window serve as my loop of
hell
Whence a damned soul looks on
Paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to
borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim.
And I save my soul—but not to-
morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew
dim)—

"My father tarries to bless my state :
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait ?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I
know—
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept.
Just so !

So we resolve on a thing and sleep.
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or
cheap

As the cost of this cup of bliss may
prove
To body or soul, I will drain it
deep !"

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close
on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled "'Twas a very funeral
Your lady will think, this feast of ours,
A shame to efface, whate'er befall !

"What if we break from the Arno
bowers,
And let Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this
morning's flowers ?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be
seen

On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favour for me so
mean !

"Alas ! my lady leaves the south,
Each wind that comes from the
Apennine

Is a menace to her tender youth.

"No way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
'To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a
kindly fear.

Moreover Petraja is cold this spring—
Be our feast to-night as usual here !"

And then to himself—"Which night
shall bring

Thy bride to her lover's embraces,
fool

Or I am the fool, and thou art his king !

"Yet my passion must wait a night,
nor cool—

For to-night the Envoy arrives from
France,

Whose heart I unlock with thyself,
my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss
perchance.

To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's counte-
nance—

"For I ride—what should I do but
ride ?

And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well
betide !"

So said, so done : nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent
brow.

Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit
kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed
before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and
earth—

The rose would blow when the storm
passed by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's
dearth

By winter's fruits that supplant the
rose :

The world and its ways have a certain
worth !

And to press a point while these
oppose

Were a simple policy—best wait,
And lose no friends and gain no foes.

Meanwhile, worse fates than a lover's
fate,

Who daily may ride and lean and look
Where his lady watches behind the
grate !

And she—she watched the square like
a book

Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook.

When the picture was reached the
book was done,

And she turned from it all night to
scheme

Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

Weeks grew months, years—gleam by
gleam

The glory dropped from youth and
love,

And both perceived they had dreamed
a dream,

Which hovered as dreams do, still
above,

But who can take a dream for truth ?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next re-
move !

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that
streaked

Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's
tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so
peaked,—

And wondered who the woman was,
So hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—

"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who moulds the clay no love will
change,

And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the season's
range.

"Make me a face on the window there
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square !

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must
spend

Down in their darkness under the
aisle—

"To say,—'What matters at the end ?
I did no more while my heart was
warm,

Than does that image, my pale-faced
friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red
charm.

The heaven of hair, the pride of the
brow,

And the blood that blues the inside
arm—

Unless we turn, as the soul knows
how,

The earthly gift to an end divine ?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow,"

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine
With flowers and fruits which leaves
 enlace,
Was set where now is the empty
 shrine—

(With, leaning out of a bright blue
 space,
As a ghost might from a chink of sky
The passionate pale lady's face—

Eyeing ever with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breath-
 less stretch,
Some one who ever passes by—)

The Duke sighed like the simplest
 wretch
In Florence, "So, my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade
 them fetch

Some subtle fashioner of shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a
 man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall work my plan,
Mould me on horseback here aloft,
Alive—(the subtle artisan!)

"In the very square I cross so oft!
That men may admire, when future
 suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow are
 brave in bronze—
Admire and say, 'When he was
 alive,
How he would take his pleasure
 once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen meanwhile and laugh in my
 tomb
At indolence which aspires to strive."

So! while these wait the trump of
 doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Surely they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of
 bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had cut his way thro' the world
 to this.

I hear your reproach—"But delay was
 best,
For their end was a crime!"—Oh, a
 crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and
 through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment's
 view.

Must a game be played for the sake
 of pelf?
Where a button goes, 'twere an
 epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham.
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table's a hat, and your
 prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every
 whit,
Venture as truly, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or
 losing it,

If you choose to play--is my principle!
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it
 will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate
 ghost

Was, the unlit lamp and the ungirt
 loin,
 Though the end in sight was a crime,
 I say,
 You of the virtue, (we issue join)
 How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

LOVE IN A LIFE

I

Room after room,
 I hunt the house through
 We inhabit together,
 Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou
 shalt find her,
 Next time, herself!—not the trouble
 behind her
 Left in the curtain, the couch's per-
 fume!
 As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath
 blossomed anew,--
 Yon looking-glass gleamed at the
 wave of her feather.

II

Yet the day wears,
 And door succeeds door;
 I try the fresh fortune—
 Range the wide house from the wing
 to the centre.
 Still the same chance! she goes out
 as I enter.
 Spend my whole day in the quest,—
 who cares?
 But 'tis twilight, you see,—with such
 suites to explore.
 Such closets to search, such alcoves
 to importune!

LIFE IN A LOVE

ESCAPE me?
 Never—
 Beloved!

While I am I, and you are you,
 So long as the world contains us
 both,
 Me the loving and you the loth,
 While the one eludes, must the other
 pursue.

My life is a fault at last, I fear—
 It seems too much like a fate, in-
 deed!
 Though I do my best I shall scarce
 succeed—
 But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
 To dry one's eyes and laugh at a
 fall.

And baffled, get up to begin again.—
 So the chace takes up one's life,
 that's all.

While, look but once from your
 farthest bound,

At me so deep in the dust and dark,
 No sooner the old hope drops to
 ground

Than a new one, straight to the
 selfsame mark,

I shape me—

Ever

Removed!

HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

I ONLY knew one poet in my life:
 And this, or something like it, was
 his way.

You saw go up and down Valladolid,
 A man of mark, to know next time
 you saw.

His very serviceable suit of black
 Was courtly once and conscientious
 still,

And many might have worn it, though
 none did:

The cloak that somewhat shone and
 shewed the threads

Had purpose, and the ruff, signifi-
 cance.

He walked and tapped the pavement
 with his cane,

Scenting the world, looking it full in
 face,

An old dog, bald and blindish, at his
 heels.

They turned up, now, the alley by the church,
That leads no whither; now, they
breathed themselves
On the main promenade just at the
wrong time.
You'd come upon his scrutinising
hat,
Making a peaked shade blacker than
itself
Against the single window spared
some house
Intact yet with its mouldered Moor-
ish work,—
Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween
the chinks
Of some new shop a-building, French
and fine.
He stood and watched the cobbler at
his trade,
The man who slices lemons into
drink,
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the
boys
That volunteer to help him turn its
winch.
He glanced o'er books on stalls with
half an eye,
And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's
string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters
by the wall.
He took such cognisance of men and
things,
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody,—they stared at
him,
And found, less to their pleasure than
surprise,
He seemed to know them and expect
as much.
So, next time that a neighbour's
tongue was loosed,
It marked the shameful and notorious
fact,
We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master if the town
but knew!
We merely kept a Governor for form,

While this man walked about and
took account
Of all thought, said, and acted, then
went home.
And wrote it fully to our Lord the
King
Who has an itch to know things, He
knows why,
And reads them in His bed-room of
a night.
Oh, you might smile! there wanted
not a touch,
A tang of . . . well, it was not
wholly ease
As back into your mind the man's
look came—
Stricken in years a little,—such a
brow
His eyes had to live under!—clear as
flint
On either side the formidable nose
Curved, cut, and coloured, like an
eagle's claw.
Had he to do with A's surprising
fate?
When altogether old B disappeared
And young C got his mistress,—
was't our friend,
His letter to the King, that did it all?
What paid the bloodless man for so
much pains?
Our Lord the King has favourites—
manifold,
And shifts his ministry some once a
month;
Our city gets new Governors 'at
whiles,—
But never word or sign, that I could
hear,
Notified to this man about the streets
The King's approval of those letters
conned
The last thing duly at the dead of
night.
Did the man love his office? frowned
our Lord,
Exhorting when none heard—"Be-
seech me not!
Too far above my people,—beneath
Me!
I set the watch,—how should the
people know?



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Forget them, keep Me all the more
in mind!"
Was some such understanding 'twixt
the Two?

I found no truth in one report at
least—
That if you tracked him to his home,
down lanes
Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to
pace,
You found he ate his supper in a room
Blazing with lights, four Titians on
the wall,
And twenty naked girls to change his
plate!
Poor man, he lived another kind of
life
In that new, stuccoed, third house by
the bridge,
Fresh-painted, rather smart than
otherwise!
The whole street might o'erlook him
as he sat,
Leg crossing leg, one foot on the
dog's back,
Playing a decent cribbage with his
maid
(Jacynth, you're sure her name was)
o'er the cheese
And fruit, three red halves of starved
winter-pears,
Or treat of radishes in April! nine—
Ten, struck the church clock, straight
to bed went he.

My father, like the man of sense he
was,
Would point him out to me a dozen
times:
"St—St," he'd whisper, "the Cor-
regidor!"
I had been used to think that per-
sonage
Was one with lacquered breeches,
lustrous belt,
And feathers like a forest in his hat,
Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed
the news,
Announced the bull-fights, gave each
church its turn,
And memorized the miracle in vogue!

He had a great observance from us
boys—
I was in error; that was not the man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been
afraid.
To have just looked, when this man
came to die,
And seen who lined the clean gay
garret's sides
And stood about the neat low truckle-
bed,
With the heavenly manner of relieving
guard.
Here had been, mark, the general-in-
chief,
Thro' a whole campaign of the world's
life and death,
Doing the King's work all the dim
day long,
In his old coat, and up to his knees in
mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a
crust,—
And now the day was won, relieved
at once!
No further show or need for that old
coat.
You are sure, for one thing! Bless
us, all the while
How sprucely we are dressed out, you
and I!
A second, and the angels alter that.
Well, I could never write a verse, —
could you?
Let's to the Prado and make the most
of time.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I

I SAID--Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all my life seemed meant for,
fails,
Since this was written and needs
must be —
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!

Take back the hope you gave,—I
claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not
blame,
Your leave for one more last ride
with me.

II

My mistress bent that brow of hers,
Those deep dark eyes where pride
denurs
When pity would besoftening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance—
Right!
The blood replenished me again:
My last thought was at least not vain.
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride.
So one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end
to-night?

III

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at
once—
And so, you, looking and loving
best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was
here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and
fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my
breast.

IV

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped
scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life
awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.

Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated,—who can tell?
Where had I been now if the worst
befell?

And here we are riding, she and I.

V

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who suc-
ceeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either
side.
I thought, All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty Done, the Undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hope-
ful past!
I hoped she would love me. Here
we ride.

VI

What hand and brain went ever
paired?
What heart alike conceived and
dared?
What act proved all its thought had
been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can
reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-
stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

VII

What does it all mean, poet? well,
Your brain's beat into rhythm—you
tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side
by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much—but
then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?

Are you poor, sick, old ere your
time—

Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a
rhyme?

Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I
ride.

VIII

And you, great sculptor—so you gave
A score of years to art, her slave,
And that's your Venus—whence we
turn

To yonder girl that fords the burn!

You acquiesce and shall I repine?

What, man of music, you, grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,

Is this your sole praise from a friend,

“Greatly his opera's strains intend.

“But in music we know how fashions
end!”

I gave my youth—but we ride, in
fine.

IX

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate

Proposed bliss here should sublimate

My being; had I signed the bond—

Still one must lead some life beyond,

—Have a bliss to die with, dim-
descried.

This foot once planted on the goal,

This glory-garland round my soul,

Could I desery such? Try and test!

I sink back shuddering from the
quest—

Earth being so good, would Heaven
seem best?

Now, Heaven and she are beyond
this ride.

X

And yet—she has not spoke so long!

What if Heaven be that, fair and
strong

At life's best, with our eyes upturned

Whither life's flower is first discerned,

We, fixed so, ever should so abide?

What if we still ride on, we two,

With life for ever old yet new,

Changed not in kind but in degree.

The instant made eternity—

And Heaven just prove that I and she

Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

THE PATRIOT

AN OLD STORY

I

It was roses, roses, all the way.

With myrtle mixed in my path like
mad.

The house-roofs seemed to heave and
sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags
they had,

A year ago on this very day!

II

The air brot into a mist with bells.

The old walls rocked with the
crowds and cries,

Had I said, “Good folks, mere noise
repels—

But give me your sun from yonder
skies!”

They had answered, “And afterward,
what else?”

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,

To give it my loving friends to keep,
Nought man could do have I left
undone,

And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops
now—

Just a palsied few at the windows
set

For the best of the sight is, all allow,

At the Shambles' Gate—or, better
yet,

By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,

A rope cuts both my wrists behind,

And I think, by the feel, my forehead
bleeds,

For they fling, whoever has a mind.
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds

VI

Thus I entered Breseia, and thus I go!
In such triumphs, people have
dropped down dead.
"Thou, paid by the World,—what
dost thou owe
Me?" God might have questioned:
but now instead
'Tis God shall requite! I am safer so.

MASTER HUGUES OF
SAXE-GOTHA

I

HIST, but a word, fair and soft!
Forth and be judged, Master
Hugues!
Answer the question I've put you so
oft—
What do you mean by your moun-
tainous fugues?
See, we're alone in the loft.

II

I, the poor organist here,
Hugues, the composer of note—
Dead, though, and done with, this
many a year—
Let's have a colloquy, something to
quote,
Make the world prick up its ear!

III

See, the church empties apace.
Fast they extinguish the lights—
Hallo, there, sacristan! five minutes'
grace!
Here's a crank pedal wants setting
to rights,
Baulks one of holding the base.

IV

See, our huge house of the sounds
Hushing its hundreds at once,
Bids the last loiterer back to his
bounds
—Oh, you may challenge them, not
a response
Get the church saints on their rounds!

V

(Saints go their rounds, who shall
doubt?
—March, with the moon to ad-
mire.
Up nave, down chancel, turn transept
about,
Supervise all betwixt pavement and
spire,
Put rats and mice to the rout—

VI

Aloys and Jurien and Just—
Order things back to their place.
Have a sharp eye lest the candlesticks
rust,
Rub the church plate, darn the
sacrament lace,
(Clear the desk velvet of dust.)

VII

Here's your book, younger folks
shelve!
Played I not off-hand and runningly.
Just now, your masterpiece, hard
number twelve?
Here's what should strike,—could
one handle it cunningly.
Help the axe, give it a helve!

VIII

Page after page as I played,
Every bar's rest where one wipes
Sweat from one's brow, I looked up
and surveyed
O'er my three claviers, yon forest
of pipes
Whence you still peeped in the shade.

IX

Sure you were wishful to speak,
You, with brow ruled like a score,
Yes, and eyes buried in pits on each
cheek,
Like two great breves as they wrote
them of yore,
Each side that bar, your straight
beak!

X

Sure you said — "Good, the mere
notes!
Still, couldst thou take my in-
tent,
Know what procured me our Com-
pany's votes—
Masters being lauded and sciolists
shent,
Parted the sheep from the goats!"

XI

Well then, speak up, never flinch!
Quick, ere my candle's a snuff
—Burnt, do you see? to its uttermost
inch—
I believe in you, but that's not
enough.
Give my conviction a clinch!

XII

First you deliver your phrase
—Nothing propound, that I see,
Fit in itself for much blame or much
praise—
Answered no less, where no answer
needs be:
Off start the Two on their ways!

XIII

Straight must a Third interpose,
Volunteer needlessly help—
In strikes a Fourth, a Fifth thrusts in
his nose,
So the cry's open, the kennel's
a-yelp,
Argument's hot to the close!

XIV

One dissertates, he is candid—
Two must discept, —has distin-
guished!
Three helps the couple, if ever yet
man did:
Four protests, Five makes a dart at
the thing wished—
Back to One, goes the case bandied!

XV

One says his say with a difference—
More of expounding, explaining!
All now is wrangle, abuse, and voci-
ferance
Now there's a truce, all's subdued,
self-restraining—
Five, though, stands out all the stiffer
hence.

XVI

One is incisive, corrosive—
Two retorts, nettled, curt, crepi-
tant—
Three makes rejoinder, expansive,
explosive—
Four overbears them all, strident
and strepitant—
Five . . . O Danaides, O Sieve!

XVII

Now, they ply axes and crowbars—
Now, they prick pins at a tissue
Fine as a skein of the casuist
Escobar's
Worked on the bone of a lie. To
what issue?
Where is our gain at the Two-bars?

XVIII

Est fuga, volvitur rota!
On we drift. Where looms the
dim port?
One, Two, Three, Four, Five, con-
tribute their quota—
Something is gained, if one caught
but the import—
Show it us—Hugues of Saxe-Gotha!

XIX

What with affirming, denying,
Holding, risposting, subjoining,
All's like . . . it's like . . . for an
instance I'm trying . . .
There! See our roof, its gilt
moulding and groining
Under those spider-webs lying

XX

So your fugue broadens and thickens,
Greatens and deepens and lengthens,
Till one exclaims—"But where's
music, the dickens?
Blot ye the gold, while your spider-
web strengthens
Blackened to the stoutest of tickens?"

XXI

I for man's effort am zealous,
Prove me such censure's unfounded!
Seems it surprising a lover grows
jealous—
Hopes 'twas for something his
organ-pipes sounded,
Tiring three boys at the bellows?

XXII

Is it your moral of Life?
Such a web, simple and subtle,
Weave we on earth here in impotent
strife,
Backward and forward each throw-
ing his shuttle,
Death ending all with a knife?

XXIII

Over our heads Truth and Nature—
Still our life's zigzags and dodges,
Ins and outs weaving a new legis-
lature—
God's gold just shining its last
where that lodges
Palled beneath Man's usurpature!

XXIV

So we o'ershroud stars and roses,
Cherub and trophy and garland,
Nothings grow something which
quietly closes
Heaven's earnest eye,—not a
glimpse of the far land
Gets through our comments and
glozes.

XXV

Ah, but traditions, inventions,
(Say we and make up a visage) .
So many men with such various
intentions
Down the past ages must know
more than this age!
Leave the web all its dimensions!

XXVI

Who thinks Hugues wrote for the
deaf?
Proved a mere mountain in labour?
Better submit—try again—what's the
clef?
'Faith, it's no trifle for pipe and
for tabor—
Four flats—the minor in F.

XXVII

Friend, your fugue taxes the finger.
Learning it once, who would lose
it?
Yet all the while a misgiving will
linger—
Truth's golden o'er us although we
refuse it—
Nature, thro' dust-clouds we fling
her!

XXVIII

Hugues! I advise *meâ pend*
(Counterpoint glares like a Gorgon)
Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five,
clear the arena!
Say the word, straight I unstop the
Full-Organ,
Blare out the *mode Palestrina*.

XXIX

While in the roof, if I'm right there—
... Lo, you, the wick in the
socket!
Hallo, you sacristan, show us a light
there!
Down it dips, gone like a rocket!

What, you want, do you, to come
unawares,
Sweeping the church up for first morning-prayers,
And find a poor devil at end of his
cures
At the foot of your rotten-planked
rat-riddled stairs?
Do I carry the moon in my pocket?

BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY

No more wine? then we'll push
back chairs and talk.
A final glass for me, tho': cool, I faith!
We ought to have our Abbey back,
you see,
It's different, preaching in basilicas,
And doing duty in some masterpiece
Like this of brother Pugin's, bless his
heart!
I doubt if they're half baked, those
chalk rosettes.
Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings every-
where;
It's just like breathing in a lime-kiln:
eh?
These hot long ceremonies of our
church
Cost us a little—oh, they pay the
price,
You take me—amply pay it! Now,
we'll talk.

So, you despise me, Mr. Gigadibs.
No deprecation,—nay, I beg you,
sir!
Beside 'tis our engagement: don't
you know,
I promised, if you'd watch a dinner
out,
We'd see truth dawn together?—truth
that peeps
Over the glass's edge when dinner's
done,
And body gets its sop and holds its
noise

And leaves soul free a little. Now's
the time
'Tis break of day! You do despise
me then.
And if I say, "despise me,"—never
fear
I know you do not in a certain
sense—
Not in my arm-chair for example
here.
I well imagine you respect my place
(Status, *entourage*, worldly circum-
stance)
Quite to its value—very much in
deed
—Are up to the protesting eyes of
you
In pride at being seated here for
once—
You'll turn it to such capital account!
When somebody, through years and
years to come,
Hints of the bishop,—names me—
that's enough
"Blougram? I knew him"—(into it
you slide,
"Dined with him once, a Corpus
Christi Day,
All alone, we two—he's a clever
man—
And after dinner,—why, the wine you
know,—
Oh, there was wine, and good!—what
with the wine . . .
'Faith, we began upon all sorts of
talk!
He's no bad fellow, Blougram—he
had seen
Something of mine he relished—some
review—
He's quite above their humbug in
his heart.
Half-said as much, indeed—the
thing's his trade—
I warrant, Blougram's sceptical at
times—
How otherwise? I liked him, I con-
fess!"
Che ché, my dear sir, as we say at
Rome,
Don't you protest now! It's fair
give and take;

You have had your turn and spoken
your home-truths
The hand's mine now, and here you
follow suit.

Thus much conceded, still the first
fact stays —
You do despise me ; your ideal of life
Is not the bishop's—you would not
be I —
You would like better to be Goethe,
now,
Or Buonaparte—or, bless me, lower
still,
Count D'Orsay,—so you did what
you preferred,
Spoke as you thought, and, as you
cannot help,
Believed or disbelieved, no matter
what,
So long as on that point, whate'er it
was,
You loosed your mind, were whole
and sole yourself.
—That, my ideal never can include,
Upon that element of truth and worth
Never be based ! for say they make
me Pope—
(They can't—suppose it for our argu-
ment !)
Why, there I'm at my tether's end—
I've reached
My height, and not a height which
pleases you.
An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say.
It's like those eerie stories nurses tell,
Of how some actor played Death on
a stage
With pasteboard crown, sham orb,
and tinselled dart,
And called himself the monarch of
the world.
Then going in the tire-room afterward
Because the play was done, to shift
himself,
Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly
The moment he had shut the closet
door
By Death himself—Thus God might
touch a Pope
At unawares, ask what his baubles
mean,

And whose part he pre-acted to play
just now ?
Best be yourself, imperial, plain and
true !

So, drawing comfortable breath again,
You weigh and find whatever more
or less
I boast of my ideal realised
Is nothing in the balance when
opposed
To your ideal, your grand simple life,
Of which you will not realise one jot.
I am much, you are nothing ; you
would be all,
I would be merely much—you beat
me there.

No, friend, you do not beat me,—
hearken why.
The common problem, yours, mine,
every one's.
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be,—but, finding
first
What may be, then find how to make
it fair
Up to our means—a very different
thing !
No abstract intellectual plan of life
Quite irrespective of life's plainest
laws,
But one, a man, who is man and
nothing more
May lead within a world which (by
your leave)
Is Rome or London—not Fool's-
paradise.
Embellish Rome, idealise away,
Make Paradise of London if you can.
You're welcome, nay, you're wise.

A simile
We mortals cross the ocean of this
world
Each in his average cabin of a life
The best's not big, the worst yields-
elbow-room.
Now for our six months' voyage—
how prepare ?
You come on shipboard with a lands
man's list

Of things he calls convenient—so they are!
 An India screen is pretty furniture,
 A piano-forte is a fine resource,
 All Balzac's novels occupy one shelf,
 The new edition fifty volumes long;
 And little Greek books with the funny type
 They get up well at Leipzig till the next.
 Go on! slabbed marble, what a bath it makes!
 And Parma's pride, the Jerome, let us add!
 'Twere pleasant could Correggio's fleeting glow
 Hang full in face of one where'er one roams,
 Since he more than the others brings with him
 Italy's self, the marvellous Modenese!
 Yet 'twas not on your list before, perhaps.
 Alas! friend, here's the agent . . . is't the name?
 The captain, or whoever's master here—
 You see him screw his face up; what's his cry
 Ere you set foot on shipboard? "Six feet square!"
 If you won't understand what six feet mean,
 Compute and purchase stores accordingly.
 And if in pique because he overhauls
 Your Jerome, piano and bath, you come on board
 Bare—why you cut a figure at the first
 While sympathetic landsmen see you off;
 Not afterwards, when, long ere half seas o'er,
 You peep up from your utterly naked boards
 Into some snug and well-appointed berth
 Like mine, for instance (try the cooler jug—
 Put back the other, but don't jog the ice),
 And mortified you mutter "Well and good—
 He sits enjoying his sea-furniture—
 'Tis stout and proper, and there's store of it,
 Though I've the better notion, all agree,
 Of fitting rooms up! hang the carpenter,
 Next ship-shape fixings and contrivances
 I would have brought my Jerome frame and all!"
 And meantime you bring nothing; never mind—
 You've proved your artist-nature: what you don't,
 You might bring, so despise me, as I say.
 Now come, let's backward to the starting-place.
 See my way: we're two college friends, suppose
 Prepare together for our voyage, then,
 Each note and check the other in his work.
 Here's mine, a bishop's outfit; criticise!
 What's wrong? why won't you be a bishop too?
 Why, first, you don't believe, you don't and can't
 (Not stately, that is, and fixedly
 And absolutely and exclusively)
 In any revelation called divine.
 No dogmas nail your faith—and what remains
 But say so, like the honest man you are?
 First, therefore, overhaul theology!
 Nay, I too, not a fool, you please to think,
 Must find believing every whit as hard,
 And if I do not frankly say as much,
 The ugly consequence is clear enough.
 Now, wait, my friend: well, I do not believe
 If you'll accept no faith that is not fixed,

Absolute and exclusive, as you say.
(You're wrong—I mean to prove it
in due time)

Meanwhile, I know where difficulties
lie

I could not, cannot solve, nor ever
shall,

So give up hope accordingly to solve
(To you, and over the wine). Our
dogmas then

With both of us, tho' in unlike degree,
Missing full credence—overboard with
them!

I mean to meet you on your own
premise---

Good, there go mine in company
with yours!

And now what are we? unbelievers
both,

Calm and complete, determinately
fixed

To-day, to-morrow and for ever, pray?
You'll guarantee me that? Not so,
I think.

In no-wise! all we've gained is, that
belief,

As 'unbelief before, shakes us by fits,
Confounds us like its predecessor.
Where's

The gain? how can we guard our
unbelief,

Make it bear fruit to us?—the prob-
lem here.

Just when we are safest, there's a
sunset-touch.

A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's
death,

A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and
fears

As old and new at once as Nature's self.

To rap and knock and enter in our
soul,

Take hands and dance there, a fan-
tastic ring,

Round the ancient idol, on his base
again,—

The grand Perhaps! We look on
helplessly.

There the old misgivings, crooked
questions are

This good God,—what he could do,
if he would.

Would, if he could—then must have
done long since:

If so, when, where, and how? some
way must be,

Once feel about, and soon or late you hit
Some sense, in which it might be,
after all.

Why not, "The Way, the Truth, the
Life?"

That way

Over the mountain, which who stands
upon

Is apt to doubt if it's indeed a road;
While if he views it from the waste
itself.

Up goes the line there, plain from
base to brow,

Not vague, mistakable! what's a
break or two

Seen from the unbroken desert either
side?

And then (to bring in fresh philo-
sophy)

What if the breaks themselves should
prove at last

The most consummate of contrivances
To train a man's eye, teach him what
is faith?

And so we stumble at truth's very test!
What have we gained then by our
unbelief

But a life of doubt diversified by faith,
For one of faith diversified by doubt.

We called the chess-board white,—
we call it black.

"Well," you rejoin, "the end's no
worse, at least.

We've reason for both colours on the
board.

Why not confess, then, where I drop
the faith

And you the doubt, that I'm as right
as you?"

Because, friend, in the next place,
this being so,

And both things even,—faith and
unbelief

Left to a man's choice, we'll proceed a step,
Returning to our image, which I like.

A man's choice, yes—but a cabin-passenger's—

The man made for the special life of the world—

Do you forget him? I remember though!

Consult our ship's conditions and you find

One and but one choice suitable to all,
The choice that you unluckily prefer.

Turning things topsy-turvy—they or it
Going to the ground. Belief or unbelief

Bears upon life, determines its whole course,

Begins at its beginning. See the world
Such as it is,—you made it not, nor I;

I mean to take it as it is, and you,
Not so you'll take it, though you get nought else.

I know the special kind of life I like,
What suits the most my idiosyncrasy,

Brings out the best of me and bears me fruit

In power, peace, pleasantness, and length of days.

I find that positive belief does this
For me, and unbelief, no whit of this.

—For you, it does, however—that we'll try!

'Tis clear, I cannot lead my life, at least

Induce the world to let me peaceably,
Without declaring at the outset,

"Friends,
I absolutely and peremptorily

Believe!"—I say faith is my waking life.

One sleeps, indeed, and dreams at intervals,

We know, but waking's the main point with us,

And my provision's for life's waking part.

Accordingly, I use heart, head and hands

All day, I build, scheme, study and make friends;

And when night overtakes me, down I lie.

Sleep, dream a little, and get done with it,

The sooner the better, to begin afresh.

What's midnight's doubt before the dayspring's faith?

You, the philosopher, that disbelieve

That recognise the night, give dream their weight—

To be consistent you should keep your bed,

Abstain from healthy acts that prove you a man.

For fear you drowse perhaps at unawares!

And certainly at night you'll sleep and dream,

Live through the day and bustle as you please.

And so you live to sleep as I to wake,
To unbelieve as I to still believe?

Well, and the common sense of the world calls you

Bed ridden, —and its good things come to me.

Its estimation, which is half the fight,
That's the first cabin-comfort I secure—

The next . . . but you perceive with half an eye!

Come, come, it's best believing, if we can—

You can't but own that.

Next, concede again—

If once we choose belief, on all accounts

We can't be too decisive in our faith.

Conclusive and exclusive in its terms,
To suit the world which gives us the

good things.

In every man's career are certain points

Whereon he dares not be indifferent;
The world detects him clearly, if he is.

As baffled at the game, and losing life.

He may care little or he may care much

For riches, honour, pleasure, work,
 repose,
 Since various theories of life and life's
 Success are extant which might easily
 Comport with either estimate of these ;
 And whoso chooses wealth or poverty,
 Labour or quiet, is not judged a fool
 Because his fellows would choose
 otherwise.
 We let him choose upon his own
 account
 So long as he's consistent with his
 choice.
 But certain points, left wholly to
 himself,
 When once a man has arbitrated on,
 We say he must succeed there or go
 hang.
 Thus, he should wed the woman he
 loves most
 Or needs most, whatsoe'er the love
 or need--
 For he can't wed twice. Then, he
 must avouch
 Or follow, at the least, sufficiently,
 The form of faith his conscience holds
 the best,
 Whate'er the process of conviction
 was.
 For nothing can compensate his mis-
 take
 On such a point, the man himself
 being judge--
 He cannot wed twice, nor twice lose
 his soul.

Well now-- there's one great form
 of Christian faith
 I happened to be born in--which to
 teach
 Was given me as I grew up, on all
 hands,
 As best and readiest means of living
 by ;
 The same on examination being proved
 The most pronounced moreover, fixed,
 precise
 And absolute form of faith in the
 whole world--
 Accordingly, most potent of all forms
 For working on the world. Observe,
 my friend,

Such as you know me, I am free to
 say
 In these hard latter days which
 hamper one,
 Myself, by no immoderate exercise
 Of intellect and learning, and the tact
 To let external forces work for me,
 Bid the street's stones be bread and
 they are bread,
 Bid Peter's creed, or, rather, Hilde-
 brand's,
 Exalt me o'er my fellows in the
 world
 And make my life an ease and joy
 and pride,
 It does so,—which for me's a great
 point gained.
 Who have a soul and body that exact
 A comfortable care in many ways.
 There's power in me and will to
 dominate
 Which I must exercise, they hurt me
 else :
 In many ways I need mankind's
 respect,
 Obedience, and the love that's born
 of fear :
 While at the same time, there's a taste
 I have,
 A toy of soul, a titillating thing.
 Refuses to digest these dainties crude.
 The naked life is gross till clothed
 upon :
 I must take what men offer, with a
 grace
 As though I would not, could I help
 it, take !
 A uniform to wear though over-rich—
 Something imposed on me, no choice
 of mine ;
 No fancy-dress worn for pure fashion's
 sake
 And despicable therefore ! now men
 kneel
 And kiss my hand—of course the
 Church's hand.
 Thus I am made, thus life is best for
 me,
 And thus that it should be I have
 procured ;
 And thus it could not be another way,
 I venture to imagine.

You'll reply—
 So far my choice, no doubt, is a
 success;
 But were I made of better elements,
 With nobler instincts, purer tastes,
 like you,
 I hardly would account the thing
 success
 Though it do all for me I say.

But, friend,
 We speak of what is—not of what
 might be,
 And how 'twere better if 'twere other-
 wise.
 I am the man you see here plain
 enough—
 Grant I'm a beast, why beasts must
 lead beasts' lives!
 Suppose I own at once to tail and
 claws—
 The tailless man exceeds me: but
 being tailed
 I'll lash out lion-fashion, and leave
 apes
 To dock their stump and dress their
 haunches up.
 My business is not to remake myself,
 But make the absolute best of what
 God made.
 Or—our first simile—though you
 proved me doomed
 To a viler berth still, to the steerage-
 hole,
 The sheep-pen or the pig-stye, I
 should strive
 To make what use of each were pos-
 sible:
 And as this cabin gets upholstery,
 That hutch should rustle with suffi-
 cient straw.

But, friend, I don't acknowledge
 quite so fast
 I fail of all your manhood's lofty
 tastes
 Enumerated so complacently,
 On the mere ground that you forsooth
 can find
 In this particular life I choose to lead
 No fit provision for them. Can you
 not?

Say you, my fault is I address myself
 To grosser estimators than I need,
 And that's no way of holding up the
 soul—
 Which, nobler, needs men's praise
 perhaps, yet knows
 One wise man's verdict outweighs all
 the fools',—
 Would like the two, but, forced to
 choose, takes that?
 I pine among my million imbeciles
 (You think) aware some dozen men
 of sense
 Eye me and know me, whether I
 believe
 In the last winking Virgin, as I vow,
 And am a fool, or disbelieve in her,
 And am a knave,—approve in neither
 case,
 Withhold their voices though I look
 their way:
 Like Verdi when at his worst opera's
 end
 (The thing they gave at Florence,—
 what's its name?)
 While the mad houseful's plaudits
 near out-
 His orchestra of salt-box, tongs and
 bones,
 He looks through all the roaring and
 the wreaths
 Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.
 Nay, friend, I meet you with an
 answer here—
 For even your prime men who ap-
 praise their kind
 Are men still, catch a thing within a
 thing,
 See more in a truth than the truth's
 simple self,
 Confuse themselves. You see lads
 walk the street
 Sixty the minute; what's to note in
 that?
 You see one lad o'erstride a chimney-
 stack;
 Him you must watch—he's sure to
 fall, yet stands!
 Our interest's on the dangerous edge
 of things.
 The honest thief, the tender murderer,

The superstitious atheist, demireps
 That love and save their souls in new
 French books--
 We watch while these in equilibrium
 keep
 The giddy line midway: one step
 aside.
 They're classed and done with. I,
 then, keep the line
 Before your sages,—just the men to
 shrink
 From the gross weights, coarse scales,
 and labels broad
 You offer their refinement. Fool or
 knave?
 Why needs a bishop be a fool or
 knave
 When there's a thousand diamond
 weights between?
 So I enlist them. Your picked
 Twelve, you'll find,
 Profess themselves indignant, scan-
 dalised
 At thus being held unable to explain
 How a superior man who disbelieves
 May not believe as well: that's
 Schelling's way!
 It's through my coming in the tail of
 time,
 Nicking the minute with a happy
 tact.
 Had I been born three hundred years
 ago
 They'd say, "What's strange? Blou-
 gram of course believes;"
 And, seventy years since, "disbelieves
 of course."
 But now, "He may believe; and yet,
 and yet
 How can he?"—All eyes turn with
 interest.
 Whereas, step off the line on either
 side—
 You, for example, clever to a fault,
 The rough and ready man that write
 apace,
 Read somewhat seldomer, think per-
 haps even less—
 You disbelieve! Who wonders and
 who cares?
 Lord So-and-So—his coat bedropt
 with wax,

All Peter's chains about his waist, his
 back
 Brave with the needlework of Noodle-
 dom,
 Believes! Again, who wonders and
 who cares?
 But I, the man of sense and learning
 too,
 The able to think yet act, the this, the
 that,
 I, to believe at this late time of day!
 Enough; you see, I need not fear
 contempt.
 —Except it's yours! admire me as
 these may,
 You don't. But what at least do you
 admire?
 Present your own perfections, your
 ideal.
 Your pattern man for a minute—oh,
 make haste!
 Is it Napoleon you would have us
 grow?
 Concede the means; allow his head
 and hand,
 (A large concession, clever as you
 are)
 Good!—In our common primal ele-
 ment
 Of unbelief (we can't believe, you
 know—
 We're still at that admission, recollect)
 Where do you find—apart from,
 towering-o'er
 The secondary temporary aims
 Which satisfy the gross tastes you
 despise—
 Where do you find his star?—his
 crazy trust
 God knows through what or in what?
 its alive
 And shines and leads him and that's
 all we want
 Have we aught in our sober night
 shall point
 Such ends as his were, and direct
 the means
 Of working out our purpose straight
 as his,
 Nor bring a moment's trouble on
 success

With after-care to justify the same?
 — Be a Napoleon and yet disbelieve!
 Why, the man's mad, friend, take his
 light away.
 What's the vague good of the world
 for which you'd dare
 With comfort to yourself blow millions
 up?
 We neither of us see it! we do see
 The blown-up millions—spatter of
 their brains
 And writhing of their bowels and so
 forth,
 In that bewildering entanglement
 Of horrible eventualities
 Past calculation to the end of time!
 Can I mistake for some clear word of
 God
 (Which were my ample warrant for
 it all)
 His puff of hazy instincts, idle talk,
 "The state, that's I," quack-nonsense
 about kings,
 And (when one beats the man to his
 last hold)
 The vague idea of setting things to
 rights,
 Policing people efficaciously,
 More to their profit, most of all to his
 own:
 The whole to end that dismallest of
 ends
 By an Austrian marriage, cant to us
 the church,
 And resurrection of the old *régime*.
 Would I, who hope to live a dozen
 years,
 Fight Austerlitz for reasons such and
 such?
 No: for, concede me but the merest
 chance
 Doubt may be wrong—there's judg-
 ment, life to come!
 With just that chance, I dare not.
 Doubt proves right?
 This present life is all? you offer me
 Its dozen noisy years with not a
 chance
 That wedding an Arch-Duchess,
 wearing lace,
 And getting called by divers new-
 coined names,
 Will drive off ugly thoughts and let
 me dine,
 Sleep, read and chat in quiet as I
 like!
 Therefore, I will not.
 Take another case;
 Fit up the cabin yet another way.
 What say ye to the poet's? shall we
 write
 Hamlets, Othellos—make the world
 our own,
 Without a risk to run of either sort?
 I can't!—to put the strongest reason
 first.
 "But try," you urge, "the trying
 shall suffice:
 The aim, if reached or not, makes
 great the life.
 Try to be Shakspeare, leave the rest
 to fate!"
 Spare my self-knowledge—there's no
 fooling me!
 If I prefer remaining my poor self,
 I say so not in self-dispraise but
 praise.
 If I'm a Shakspeare, let the well
 alone—
 Why should I try to be what now
 I am?
 If I'm no Shakspeare, as too pro-
 bable,—
 His power and consciousness and self-
 delight
 And all we want in common, shall I
 find—
 Trying for ever? while on points of
 taste
 Wherewith, to speak it humbly, he
 and I
 Are dowered alike—I'll ask you, I
 or he.
 Which in our two lives realises
 most?
 Much, he imagined—somewhat, I
 possess.
 He had the imagination; stick to
 that!
 Let him say "In the face of my soul's
 works
 Your world is worthless and I touch
 it not

Lest I should wrong them"—I with-
 draw my plea.
 But does he say so? look upon his
 life!
 Himself, who only can, gives judg-
 ment there.
 He leaves his towers and gorgeous
 palaces
 To build the trimmest house in Strat-
 ford town;
 Saves money, spends it, owns the
 worth of things,
 Giulio Romano's pictures, Dowland's
 lute;
 Enjoys a show, respects the puppets,
 too,
 And none more, had he seen it's
 entry once,
 Than "Pandulph, of fair Milan
 cardinal."
 Why then should I who play that
 personage.
 The very Pandulph Shakspeare's
 fancy made.
 Be told that had the poet chanced to
 start
 From where I stand now (some de-
 gree like mine
 Being just the goal he ran his race to
 reach)
 He would have run the whole race
 back, forsooth.
 And left being Pandulph, to begin
 write plays?
 Ah, the earth's best can be but the
 earth's best!
 Did Shakspeare live, he could but sit
 at home
 And get himself in dreams the Vati-
 can.
 Greek busts, Venetian paintings,
 Roman walls,
 And English books, none equal to his
 own,
 Which I read, bound in gold (he
 never did).
 Terni and Naples' bay and Gothard's
 top—
 Eh, friend? I could not fancy one of
 these—
 But, as I pour this claret, there they
 are—

I've gained them—crossed St. Goth-
 ard's last July
 With ten mules to the carriage and a
 bed
 Slung inside; is my hap the worse
 for that?
 We want the same things, Shakspeare
 and myself,
 And what I want, I have: he, gifted
 more,
 Could fancy he too had it when he
 liked,
 But not so thoroughly that if fate
 allowed
 He would not have it also in my sense.
 We play one game. I send the ball
 aloft
 No less adroitly that of fifty strokes
 Scarce five go o'er the wall so wide
 and high
 Which sends them back to me: I
 wish and get.
 He struck balls higher and with better
 skill,
 But at a poor fence level with his
 head,
 And hit—his Stratford house, a coat
 of arms,
 Successful dealings in his grain and
 wool,—
 While I receive heaven's incense in
 my nose
 And style myself the cousin of Queen
 Bess.
 Ask him, if this life's all, who wins
 the game?
 Believe—and our whole argument
 breaks up.
 Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat;
 Only, we can't command it; fire and
 life
 Are all, dead matter's nothing, we
 agree:
 And be it a mad dream or God's very
 breath.
 The fact's the same,—belief's fire
 once in us,
 Makes of all else mere stuff to show
 itself.
 We penetrate our life with such a
 glow

As fire lends wood and iron—this
 turns steel,
 That burns to ash—all's one, fire
 proves its power
 For good or ill, since men call flare
 success.
 But paint a fire, it will not therefore
 burn.
 Light one in me, I'll find it food
 enough!
 Why, to be Luther that's a life to
 lead,
 Incomparably better than my own.
 He comes, reclaims God's earth for
 God, he says,
 Sets up God's rule again by simple
 means,
 Re opens a shut book, and all is done.
 He flared out in the flaring of man-
 kind;
 Such Luther's luck was how shall
 such be mine?
 If he succeeded, nothing's left to do:
 And if he did not altogether—well,
 Strauss is the next advance. All
 Strauss should be
 I might be also. But to what result?
 He looks upon no future: Luther did.
 What can I gain on the denying side?
 Ice makes no conflagration. State
 the facts,
 Read the text right, emancipate the
 world—
 The emancipated world enjoys itself
 With scarce a thank-you—Blougram
 told it first
 It could not owe a farthing,—not to him
 More than St. Paul! 'twould press its
 pay, you think?
 Then add there's still that plaguey
 hundredth chance
 Strauss may be wrong. And so a
 risk is run—
 For what gain? not for Luther's, who
 secured
 A real heaven in his heart throughout
 his life,
 Supposing death a little altered things!

 "Ay, but since really I lack faith,"
 you cry,
 "I run the same risk really on all sides,

 In cool indifference as bold unbelief.
 As well be Strauss as swing 'twixt
 Paul and him.
 It's not worth having, such imperfect
 faith,
 Nor more available to do faith's work
 Than unbelief like yours. Whole
 far, or none!"

 Softly, my friend! I must dispute
 that point.
 Once own the use of faith, I'll find
 you faith
 We're back on Christian ground.
 You call for faith:
 I show you doubt, to prove that faith
 exists.
 The more of doubt, the stronger faith.
 I say,
 If faith o'ercomes doubt. How I
 know it does?
 By life and man's free will, God gave
 for that!
 To mould life as we choose it, shows
 our choice:
 That's our one act, the previous
 work's His own.
 You criticise the soil? it reared this
 tree—
 This broad life and whatever fruit it
 bears!
 What matter though I doubt at every
 pore,
 Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at
 my fingers' ends,
 Doubts in the trivial work of every
 day,
 Doubts at the very bases of my soul
 In the grand moments when she
 probes herself—
 If finally I have a life to show,
 The thing I did, brought out in
 evidence
 Against the thing done to me under-
 ground
 By Hell and all its brood, for aught I
 know?
 I say, whence sprang this? shows it
 faith or doubt?
 All's doubt in me; where's break of
 faith in this?
 It is the idea, the feeling and the love

God means mankind should strive for
and show forth,
Whatever be the process to that end.—
And not historic knowledge, logic
sound,
And metaphysical acumen, sure !
“What think ye of Christ,” friend ?
when all's done and said,
You like this Christianity or not ?
It may be false, but will you wish it
true ?
Has it your vote to be so if it can ?
Trust you an instinct silenced long
ago
That will break silence and enjoin you
love
What mortified philosophy is hoarse,
And all in vain, with bidding you
despise ?
If you desire faith—then you've faith
enough.
What else seeks God—nay, what else
seek ourselves ?
You form a notion of me, we'll
suppose,
On hearsay : it's a favourable one :
“But still” (you add), “there was no
such good man,
Because of contradictions in the facts.
One proves, for instance, he was born
in Rome,
This Blougram—yet throughout the
tales of him
I see he figures as an Englishman.”
Well, the two things are reconcil-
able.
But would I rather you discovered
that,
Subjoining—“Still, what matter
though they be ?
Blougram concerns me nought, born
here or there.”

Pure faith indeed—you know not
what you ask !
Naked belief in God the Omnipotent,
Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too
much
The sense of conscious creatures to be
borne.
It were the seeing him, no flesh shall
dare.

Some think, Creation's meant to show
him forth :
I say, it's meant to hide him all it can,
And that's what all the blessed Evil's
for.
Its use in time is to environ us,
Our breath, our drop of dew, with
shield enough
Against that sight till we can bear its
stress.
Under a vertical sun, the exposed
brain
And lidless eye and disemprisoned
heart
Less certainly would wither up at once
Than mind, confronted with the truth
of Him.
But time and earth case-harden us to
live ;
The feeblest sense is trusted most ;
the child
Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the
place,
Plays on and grows to be a man like
us.
With me, faith means perpetual un-
belief
Kept quiet like the snake 'neath
Michael's foot
Who stands calm just because he feels
it withe.
Or, if that's too ambitious,—here's
my box—
I need the excitation of a pinch
Threatening the torpor of the inside-
nose
Nigh on the imminent sneeze that
never comes.
“Leave it in peace”—advise the
simple folk—
Make it aware of peace by itching-fits,
Say I—let doubt occasion still more
faith !

You'll say, once all believed, man,
woman, child,
In that dear middle-age these noodles
praise.
How you'd exult if I could put you
back
Six hundred years, blot out cosmogony,
Geology, ethnology, what not,

(Greek endings with the little passing-
 bell
 That signifies some faith's about to die:
 And set you square with Genesis
 again, —
 When such a traveller told you his
 last news,
 He saw the ark a-top of Ararat
 But did not climb there since 'twas
 getting dusk
 And robber-bands infest the moun-
 tain's foot!
 How should you feel, I ask, in such
 an age,
 How act? As other people felt and
 did;
 With soul more blank than this
 decanter's knob,
 Believe—and yet lie, kill, rob, forni-
 cate
 Full in beliefs face, like the beast
 you'd be!
 No, when the fight begins within
 himself,
 A man's worth something. God
 stoops o'er his head,
 Satan looks up between his feet—
 both tug
 He's left, himself, in the middle: the
 soul wakes
 And grows. Prolong that battle
 through his life!
 Never leave growing till the life to
 come!
 Here, we've got cailous to the Virgin's
 winks
 That used to puzzle people whole-
 somely
 Men have outgrown the shame of
 being fools.
 What are the laws of Nature, not to
 bend
 If the Church bid them, brother New-
 man asks.
 Up with the Immaculate Conception,
 then—
 On to the rack with faith—is my
 advice!
 Will not that hurry us upon our knees
 Knocking our breasts, "It can't be—
 yet it shall!
 Who am I, the worm, to argue with
 my Pope?
 Low things confound the high things!"
 and so forth.
 That's better than acquitting God with
 grace
 As some folks do. He's tried—no
 case is proved,
 Philosophy is lenient—He may go!
 You'll say the old system's not so
 obsolete
 But men believe still: ay, but who
 and where?
 King Bomba's lazzaroni foster yet
 The sacred flame, so Antonelli writes;
 But even of these, what ragamuffin-
 saint
 Believes God watches him continually,
 As he believes in fire that it will burn,
 Or rain that it will drench him?
 Break fire's law,
 Sin against rain, although the penalty
 Be just a singe or soaking? No, he
 smiles;
 Those laws are laws that can enforce
 themselves.
 The sum of all is—yes, my doubt
 is great,
 My faith's the greater—then my faith's
 enough.
 I have read much, thought much,
 experienced much,
 Yet would die rather than avow my
 fear
 The Naples' liquefaction may be false,
 When set to happen by the palace-
 clock.
 According to the clouds or dinner-
 time.
 I hear you recommend, I might at
 least
 Eliminate, declassify my faith
 Since I adopt it; keeping what I
 must
 And leaving what I can—such points
 as this!
 I won't—that is, I can't throw one
 away.
 Supposing there's no truth in what I
 said

About the need of trials to man's
faith.
Still, when you bid me purify the
same,
To such a process I discern no end,
Clearing off one excrescence to see
two:
There's ever a next in size, now
grown as big,
That meets the knife—I cut and cut
again!
First cut the Liquefaction, what
comes last
But Fichte's clever cut at God him-
self?
Experimentalise on sacred things?
I trust nor hand nor eye nor heart
nor brain
To stop betimes: they all get drunk
alike.
The first step, I am master not to take.

You'd find the cutting process to
your taste
As much as leaving growths of lies
unpruned,
Nor see more danger in it, you retort.
Your taste's worth mine; but my
taste proves more wise
When we consider that the steadfast
hold
On the extreme end of the chain of
faith
Gives all the advantage, makes the
difference,
With the rough purblind mass we seek
to rule.
We are their lords, or they are free
of us
Just as we tighten or relax that hold.
So, other matters equal, we'll revert
To the first problem—which if solved
my way
And thrown into the balance turns
the scale—
How we may lead a comfortable life,
How suit our luggage to the cabin's
size.

Of course you are remarking all
this time
How narrowly and grossly I view life,

Respect the creature-comforts, care
to rule
The masses, and regard complacently
"The cabin," in our old phrase!
Well, I do.
I act for, talk for, live for this world
now.
As this world cal's for action, life and
talk—
No prejudice to what next world may
prove,
Whose new laws and requirements
my best pledge
To observe them, is that I observe
these now,
Doing hereafter what I do meanwhile.
Let us concede (gratuitously though)
Next life relieves the soul of body,
yields
Pure spiritual enjoyments: well, my
friend.
Why lose this life in the meantime,
since its use
May be to make the next life more
intense?

Do you know, I have often had a
dream
(Work it up in your next month's
article)
Of man's poor spirit in its progress
still
Losing true life for ever and a day
Through ever trying to be and ever
being
In the evolution of successive spheres,
Before its actual sphere and place of
life.
Half-way into the next, which having
reached.
It shoots with corresponding foolery
Half-way into the next still, on and off!
As when a traveller, bound from north
to south,
Scouts fur in Russia—what's its use
in France?
In France spurns flannel—where's its
need in Spain?
In Spain drops cloth—too cumbrous
for Algiers!
Linen goes next, and last the skin
itself,

A superfluity at Timbuctoo.
 When, through his journey, was the
 fool at ease?
 I'm at ease now, friend—worldly in
 this world
 I take and like its way of life; I
 think
 My brothers who administer the
 means
 Live better for my comfort—that's
 good too;
 And God, if He pronounce upon it all,
 Approves my service, which is better
 still.
 If He keep silence, why for you or
 me
 Or that brute-beast pulled-up in to-
 day's "Times,"
 What odds is't, save to ourselves,
 what life we lead?

You meet me at this issue—you
 declare,
 All special-pleading done with, truth
 is truth.
 And justifies itself by undreamed
 ways.
 You don't fear but it's better, if we
 doubt,
 To say so, acting up to our truth
 perceived
 However feebly. Do then, act away!
 Tis there I'm on the watch for you!
 How one acts
 Is, both of us agree, our chief concern:
 And how you'll act is what I fain
 would see
 If, like the candid person you appear,
 You dare to make the most of your
 life's scheme
 As I of mine, live up to its full law
 Since there's no higher law that
 counterchecks.
 Put natural religion to the test
 You've just demolished the revealed
 with—quick,
 Down to the root of all that checks
 your will,
 All prohibition to lie, kill and thief,
 Or even to be an atheistic priest!
 Suppose a pricking to incontinence
 Philosophers deduce your chastity

Or shame, from just the fact that at
 the first
 Whoso embraced a woman in the
 plain,
 Threw club down, and forewent his
 brains beside,
 So stood a ready victim in the
 reach
 Of any brother-savage club in hand
 Hence saw the use of going out of
 sight
 In wood or cave to prosecute his
 loves—
 I read this in a French book t'other
 day.
 Does law so analysed coerce you
 much?
 Oh, men spin clouds of fuzz where
 matters end,
 But you who reach where the first
 thread begins,
 You'll soon cut that! which means
 you can, but won't,
 Through certain instincts, blind, un-
 reasoned-out,
 You dare not set aside, you can't tell
 why,
 But there they are, and so you let
 them rule.
 Then, friend, you seem as much a
 slave as I,
 A liar, conscious coward and hypo-
 cite,
 Without the good the slave expects
 to get,
 Suppose he has a master after all!
 You own your instincts why what
 else do I,
 Who want, am made for, and must
 have a God
 Ere I can be aught, do aught? no
 mere name
 Want, but the true thing with what
 proves its truth,
 To wit, a relation from that thing to
 me,
 Touching from head to foot—which
 touch I feel.
 And with it take the rest, this life of
 ours!
 I live my life here; yours you dare
 not live.

Not as I state it, who (you please subjoin)
 Disfigure such a life and call it names,
 While, in your mind, remains another way
 For simple men: knowledge and power have rights,
 But ignorance and weakness have rights too.
 There needs no crucial effort to find truth
 If here or there or anywhere about
 We ought to turn each side, try hard and see,
 And if we can't, be glad we've earned at least
 The right, by one laborious proof the more,
 To graze in peace earth's pleasant pasturage.
 Men are not gods, but, properly, are brutes.
 Something we may see, all we cannot see—
 What need of lying? I say, I see all.
 And swear to each detail the most minute
 In what I think a man's face—you, mere cloud:
 I swear I hear him speak and see him wink,
 For fear, if once I drop the emphasis,
 Mankind may doubt if there's a cloud at all.
 You take the simpler life—ready to see,
 Willing to see—for no cloud's worth a face—
 And leaving quiet what no strength can move,
 And which, who bids you move? who has the right?
 I bid you; but you are God's sheep, not mine—
 "*Pastor est tui Dominus.*" You find
 In these the pleasant pastures of this life
 Much you may eat without the least offence,
 Much you don't eat because your maw objects,

Much you would eat but that your fellow-flock
 Open great eyes at you and even butt,
 And thereupon you like your friends so much
 You cannot please yourself, offending them—
 Though when they seem exorbitantly sheep,
 You weigh your pleasure with their butts and kicks
 And strike the balance. Sometimes certain fears
 Restrain you—real checks since you find them so—
 Sometimes you please yourself and nothing checks;
 And thus you graze through life with not one lie,
 And like it best.

But do you, in truth's name?
 If so, you beat—which means you are not I—
 Who needs must make earth mine and feed my fill
 Not simply unbutted at, unbickered with,
 But motioned to the velvet of the sward
 By those obsequious wethers' very selves.
 Look at me, sir; my age is double yours.
 At yours, I knew beforehand, so enjoyed,
 What now I should be—as, permit the word,
 I pretty well imagine your whole range
 And stretch of tether twenty years to come.
 We both have minds and bodies much alike.
 In truth's name, don't you want my bishopric,
 My daily bread, my influence and my state?
 You're young, I'm old, you must be old one day;
 Will you find then, as I do hour by hour,

Women their lovers kneel to, that
 cut curls
 From your fat lap-dog's ears to grace
 a brooch
 Dukes, that petition just to kiss your
 ring—
 With much beside you know or may
 conceive?
 Suppose we die to-night: well, here
 am I,
 Such were my gains, life bore this
 fruit to me,
 While writing all the same my
 articles
 On music, poetry, the fictile vase
 Found at Albano, or Anacreon's
 Greek.
 But you—the highest honour in your
 life
 The thing you'll crown yourself with,
 all your days,
 Is—dining here and drinking this
 last glass
 I pour you out in sign of amity
 Before we part for ever. Of your
 power
 And social influence, worldly worth
 in short,
 Judge what's my estimation by the
 fact—
 I do not condescend to enjoin,
 beseech,
 Hint secrecy on one of all these
 words!
 You're shrewd and know that should
 you publish it
 The world would brand the lie—my
 enemies first,
 Who'd sneer—"The bishop's an arch-
 hypocrite,
 And knave perhaps, but not so
 frank a fool."
 Whereas I should not dare for both
 my ears
 Breathe one such syllable, smile one
 such smile,
 Before my chaplain who reflects
 myself—
 My shade's so much more potent than
 your flesh,
 What's your reward, self-abnegating
 friend?

Stood you confessed of those ex-
 ceptional
 And privileged great natures that
 dwarf mine—
 A zealot with a mad ideal in reach,
 A poet just about to print his ode,
 A statesman with a scheme to stop
 this war.
 An artist whose religion is his art,
 I should have nothing to object!
 such men
 Carry the fire, all things grow warm
 to them,
 Their druggist's worth my purple,
 they beat me.
 But you,—you're just as little those
 as I—
 You, Gigadibs, who, thirty years of
 age,
 Write steadily for Blackwood's
 Magazine,
 Believe you see two points in
 Hamlet's soul
 Unseized by the Germans yet—which
 view you'll print—
 Meantime the best you have to show
 being still
 That lively lightsome article we took
 Almost for the true Dickens,—what's
 the name?
 "The Slum and Cellar—or White-
 chapel life
 Limned after dark!" it made me
 laugh, I know,
 And pleased a month and brought
 you in ten pounds.
 —Success I recognise and compli-
 ment,
 And therefore give you, if you please,
 three words
 (The card and pencil-scratch is quite
 enough)
 Which whether here, in Dublin, or
 New York,
 Will get you, prompt as at my eye-
 brow's wink,
 Such terms as never you aspired to
 get
 In all our own reviews and some not
 ours.
 Go write your lively sketches,—be the
 first

"Blougram, or The Eccentric Confidence"

Or better simply say, "The Outward-bound."

Why, men as soon would throw it in my teeth

As copy and quote the infamy chalked broad

About me on the church-door opposite.

You will not wait for that experience though,

I fancy, howsoever you decide,

To discontinue—not detesting, not

Defaming, but at least—despising me!

Over his wine so smiled and talked his hour

Sylvester Blougram, styled in *partibus*

Episcopus, nec non—(the deuce knows what

It's changed to by our novel hierarchy)

With Gigadibs the literary man,

Who played with spoons, explored his plate's design,

And ranged the olive stones about its edge,

While the great bishop rolled him out his mind.

For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke.

The other portion, as he shaped it thus

For argumentatory purposes,

He felt his foe was foolish to dispute.

Some arbitrary accidental thoughts

That crossed his mind, amusing because new,

He chose to represent as fixtures there,

Invariable convictions (such they seemed

Beside his interlocutor's loose cards

Flung daily down, and not the same way twice)

While certain hell-deep instincts, man's weak tongue

Is never bold to utter in their truth

Because styled hell-deep ('tis an old mistake

To place hell at the bottom of the earth)

He ignored these,—not having in readiness

Their nomenclature and philosophy:

He said true things, but called them by wrong names.

"On the whole," he thought, "I justify myself

On every point where cavillers like this

Oppugn my life: he tries one kind of fence

I close—he's worsted, that's enough for him:

He's on the ground! if the ground should break away

I take my stand on, there's a firmer yet

Beneath it, both of us may sink and reach.

His ground was over mine and broke the first.

So let him sit with me this many a year!"

He did it five minutes. Just a week

Sufficed his sudden healthy vehemence.

(Something had struck him in the "Outward-bound"

Another way than Blougram's purpose was)

And having bought, not cabin-furniture

But settler's-implements (enough for three)

And started for Australia—there, I hope,

By this time he has tested his first plough.

And studied his last chapter of St. John.

MEMORABILIA

I

All, did you once see Shelley plain,

And did he stop and speak to you?

And did you speak to him again?

How strange it seems, and new

II

But you were living before that.
And you are living after,
And the memory I started at
My starting moves your laughter.

III

I crossed a moor with a name of its
own
And a use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines about
'Mid the blank miles round about

IV

For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather—
Well, I forget the rest.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

(CALLED "THE LITTLE
PAINTER")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for
once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you
wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring
your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend,
never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own
way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own
price,
And shut the money into this small
hand
When next it takes mine. Will it?
tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow,
Love!
I often am much wearier than you
think,
This evening more than usual, and it
seems
As if—forgive now—should you let
me sit

Here by the window with your hand
in mine
And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people
use,
Quietly, quietly, the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us
try.
To-morrow how you shall be glad for
this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she
curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, either;
you must serve
For each of the five pictures we
require
It saves a model. So I keep looking
so
My serpentine beauty, rounds on
rounds!
—How could you ever prick those
perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so
sweet!
My face, my moon, my everybody's
moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls
his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in
turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear,
no less!
You smile? why, there's my picture
ready made.
There's what we painters call our
harmony!
A common greyness silvers every-
thing,
All in a twilight, you and I alike
You, at the point of your first pride
in me
(That's gone you know), but I, at
every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all
toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the
chapel top;
That length of convent-wall across
the way

Holds the trees safer, huddled more
 inside ;
 The last monk leaves the garden ;
 days decrease
 And autumn grows, autumn in every
 thing.
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a
 shape
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in
 God's hand.
 How strange now, looks the life he
 makes us lead !
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we
 are :
 I feel he laid the fetter : let it lie !
 This chamber for example—turn your
 head—
 All that's behind us ! you don't under-
 stand
 Nor care to understand about my
 art.
 But you can hear at least when people
 speak
 And that cartoon, the second from the
 door
 It is the thing, Love ! so such
 things should be—
 Behold Madonna, I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know,
 What I see, what at bottom of my
 heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
 Do easily, too—when I say perfectly
 I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are
 judge
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last
 week,
 And just as much they used to say in
 France.
 At any rate 'tis easy, all of it !
 No sketches first, no studies, that's
 long past—
 I do what many dream of all their
 lives
 —Dream? strive to do, and agonise
 to do,
 And fail in doing. I could count
 twenty such
 On twice your fingers, and not leave
 this town,

Who strive—you don't know how the
 others strive
 To paint a little thing like that you
 smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes
 afloat,
 Yet do much less, so much less, some
 one says,
 (I know his name, no matter) so much
 less !
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia ! I am
 judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in
 them,
 In their vexed, beating, stuffed and
 stopped-up brain,
 Heart, or what'er else, than goes on
 to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's
 hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but
 themselves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's
 shut to me.
 Enter and take their place there sure
 enough,
 Though they come back and cannot
 tell the world.
 My works are nearer heaven, but I
 sit here.
 The sudden blood of these men ! at a
 word—
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them,
 it boils too.
 I, painting from myself and to my-
 self,
 Know what I do, am unmoved by
 men's blame
 Or their praise either. Somebody
 remarks
 Morello's outline there is wrongly
 traced,
 His hue mistaken—what of that? or
 else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered—
 what of that?
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed
 his grasp,
 Or what's a Heaven for? all is silver-
 grey
 Placid and perfect with my art—the
 worst !

I know both what I want and what
 might gain--
 And yet how profitless to know, to
 sigh
 "Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the
 world!" No doubt.
 Yonder's a work, now, of that famous
 youth
 The Urbinate who died five years ago.
 ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it
 me.)
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes
 to see,
 Reaching, that Heaven might so re-
 plenish him,
 Above and through his art—for it
 gives way;
 That arm is wrongly put and there
 again--
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's
 lines.
 Its body, so to speak! its soul is right,
 He means right—that, a child may
 understand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it.
 But all the play, the insight and the
 stretch—
 Out of me! out of me! And where-
 fore out?
 Had you enjoined them on me, given
 me soul.
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and
 you.
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked,
 I think--
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.
 But had you—oh, with the same
 perfect brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than
 perfect mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a
 bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the
 snare
 Had you, with these the same, but
 brought a mind!
 Some women do so. Had the mouth
 there urged
 "God and the glory! never care for
 gain.
 The present by the future, what is
 that?
 Live for fame, side by side with
 Angelo
 Rafael is waiting. Up to God all
 three!"
 I might have done it for you. So it
 seems
 Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's
 self;
 The rest avail not. Why do I need
 you?
 What wife had Rafael, or has Angelo?
 In this world, who can do a thing,
 will not—
 And who would do it, cannot, I
 perceive:
 Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat,
 too, the power—
 And thus we half-men struggle. At
 the end,
 God, I conclude, compensates,
 punishes.
 'Tis safer for me, if the award be
 strict,
 That I am something underrated here.
 Poor this long while, despised, to
 speak the truth.
 I dared not, do you know, leave home
 all day,
 For fear of chancing on the Paris
 lords.
 The best is when they pass and look
 aside;
 But they speak sometimes; I must
 hear it all.
 Well may they speak! That Francis,
 that first time,
 And that long festal year at Fontaine-
 bleau!
 I surely then could sometimes leave
 the ground,
 Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
 In that humane great monarch's golden
 look,—
 One finger in his beard or twisted curl
 Over his mouth's good mark that
 made the smile.
 One arm about my shoulder, round
 my neck,
 The jingle of his gold chain in my ear.

You painting proudly with his breath
 on me,
 All his court round him, seeing with
 his eyes,
 Such frank French eyes, and such a
 fire of souls
 Profuse, my hand kept plying by those
 hearts,
 And, best of all, this, this, this face
 beyond,
 This in the back-ground, waiting on
 my work,
 To crown the issue with a last re-
 ward!
 A good time, was it not, my kingly
 days?
 And had you not grown restless—but
 I know—
 'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my
 instinct said;
 Too live the life grew, golden and not
 grey—
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun
 should tempt
 Out of the grange whose four walls
 make his world.
 How could it end in any other way?
 You called me, and I came home to
 your heart.
 The triumph was to have ended there
 —then if
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is
 lost?
 Let my hands frame your face in your
 hair's gold,
 You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted
 that—
 The Roman's is the better when you
 pray,
 But still the other's Virgin was his
 wife—"
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to
 judge
 Both pictures in your presence; clearer
 grows
 My better fortune, I resolve to think.
 For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God
 lives,
 Said one day Angelo, his very self,
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all
 these years . . .

(When the young man was flaming
 out his thoughts
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
 Too lifted up in heart because of it)
 "Friend, there's a certain sorry little
 scrub
 Goes up and down our Florence, none
 cares how,
 Who, were he set to plan and execute
 As you are pricked on by your popes
 and kings,
 Would bring the sweat into that brow
 of yours!"
 To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is
 wrong.
 I hardly dare—yet, only you to see,
 Give the chalk here—quick, thus the
 line should go!
 Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it
 out!
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the
 truth,
 (What he? why, who but Michael
 Angelo?)
 Do you forget already words like
 those?)
 If really there was such a chance, so
 lost,
 Is, whether you're—not grateful—but
 more pleased.
 Well, let me think so. And you smile
 indeed!
 This hour has been an hour! Another
 smile?
 If you would sit thus by me every night
 I should work better, do you compre-
 hend?
 I mean that I should earn more, give
 you more.
 See, it is settled dusk now; there's a
 star;
 Morello's gone, the watch-lights shew
 the wall,
 The cue-owls speak the name we call
 them by.
 Come from the window, Love,—come
 in, at last,
 Inside the melancholy little house
 We built to be so gay with. God is
 just.
 King Francis may forgive me. Oft at
 nights

When I look up from painting, eyes
tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick
from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar fierce bright
gold,
That gold of his I did cement them
with !
Let us but love each other. Must
you go ?
That Cousin here again ? he waits
outside ?
Must see you -- you, and not with me ?
Those loans !
More gaming debts to pay ? you
smiled for that ?
Well, let smiles buy me ! have you
more to spend ?
While hand and eye and something
of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and
what's it worth ?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The grey remainder of the evening
out,
Idle, you call it, and muse per-
fectly
How I could paint were I but back
in France,
One picture, just one more -- the
Virgin's face,
Not yours this time ! I want you at
my side
To hear them -- that is, Michael
Angelo --
Judge all I do and tell you of its
worth.
Will you ? To-morrow, satisfy your
friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand -- there,
there,
And throw him in another thing or
two
If he demurs ; the whole should prove
enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak.
Beside,
What's better and what's all I care
about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the
ruff.

Love, does that please you ? Ah, but
what does he,
The Cousin ! what does he to please
you more ?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-
night.
I regret little, I would change still
less.
Since there my past life lies, why
alter it ?
The very wrong to Francis ! it is
true
I took his coin, was tempted and
compelled,
And built this house and sinned, and
all is said.
My father and my mother died of
want.
Well, had I riches of my own ? you
see
How one gets rich ! Let each one
bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and
poor they died :
And I have laboured somewhat in my
time
And not been paid profusely. Some
good son
Paint my two hundred pictures -- let
him try !
No doubt, there's something strikes a
balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems
to-night.
This must suffice me here. What
would one have ?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one
more chance --
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's
reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
To cover -- the three first without a
wife,
While I have mine ! So -- still they
overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia, -- as I
choose.
Again the Cousin's whistle ! Go, my
Love.

BEFORE

I

LET them fight it out, friend ! things
have gone too far.
God must judge the couple ! leave
them as they are
Whichever one's the guiltless, to
his glory,
And whichever one the guilt's with,
to my story.

II

Why, you would not bid men, sunk
in such a slough,
Strike no arm out further, stick and
stink as now,
Leaving right and wrong to settle the
embroilment,
Heaven with snaky Hell, in torture
and entoilment ?

III

Which of them's the culprit, how
must he conceive
God's the queen he caps to, laughing
in his sleeve !
'Tis but decent to profess oneself
beneath her.
Still, one must not be too much in
earnest either.

IV

Better sin the whole sin, sure that
God observes,
Then go live his life out ! life will try
his nerves,
When the sky, which noticed all,
makes no disclosure,
And the earth keeps up her terrible
composure.

V

Let him pace at pleasure, past the
walls of rose,
Pluck their fruits when grape-trees
graze him as he goes.
For he 'gins to guess the purpose of
the garden,
With the sly mute thing beside there
for a warden.

VI

What's the leopard-dog-thing, con-
stant to his side,
A leer and lie in every eye on its
obsequious hide ?
When will come an end of all the
mock obeisance,
And the price appear that pays for
the misfeasance ?

VII

So much for the culprit. Who's the
martyred man ?
Let him bear one stroke more, for he
sure he can.
He that strove thus evil's lump with
good to leaven,
Let him give his blood at last and get
his heaven.

VIII

All or nothing, stake it ! trusts he
God or no ?
Thus far and no farther ? farther ? be
it so.
Now, enough of your chicane of
prudent pauses,
Sage provisos, sub-intents, and saving-
clauses.

IX

Ah, "forgive" you bid him ? While
God's champion lives,
Wrong shall be resisted : dead, why
he forgives.
But you must not end my friend ere
you begin him ;
Evil stands not crowned on earth,
while oreath is in him.

X

Once more—Will the wronger, at this
last of all,
Dare to say "I did wrong," rising in
his fall ?
No ?—Let go, then—both the fighters
to their places—
While I count three, step you back
as many paces.

AFTER

TAKE the cloak from his face, and at
first
Let the corpse do its worst.

How he lies in his rights of a man !
Death has done all death can.
And absorbed in the new life he leads.
He reck's not, he heeds
Nor his wrong nor my vengeance
both strike
On his senses alike,
And are lost in the solemn and strange
Surprise of the change.

Ha, what avails death to erase
His offence, my disgrace ?
I would we were boys as of old
In the field, by the fold
His outrage, God's patience, man's
scorn
Were so easily borne.

I stand here now, he lies in his
place—
Cover the face.

IN THREE DAYS

I

So, I shall see her in three days
And just one night, but nights are
short,
Then two long hours, and that is morn.
See how I come, unchanged, un-
worn—
Feel, where my life broke off from
thine,
How fresh the splinters keep and
fine,
Only a touch and we combine !

II

Too long, this time of year, the
days !
But nights—at least the nights are
short.

As night show, where her one moon is,
A hand's-breadth of pure light and
bliss.

So, life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her ! what is worth
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth ?

III

O loaded curls, release your store
Of warmth and scent as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Out-breaking into fairy sparks
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside,
Thro' lights and darks how mani-
fold

The dark inspired, the light con-
trolled !
As early Art embrowned the gold.

IV

What great fear could one say,
"Three days
That change the world, might change
as well

Your fortune ; and if joy delays,
Be happy that no worse befell."
What small fear—if another says,
"Three days and one short night
beside

May throw no shadow on your ways ;
But years must teem with change
untried,

With chance not easily defied,
With an end somewhere undescried."

No fear !—or if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn.
Fear ? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are
short.

Then just two hours, and that is
morn.

IN A YEAR

I

NEVER any more
While I live,
Need I hope to see his face
As before.

Once his love grown chill,
 Mine may strive
 Bitterly we re-embrace,
 Single still.

II

Was it something said,
 Something done,
 Vexed him? was it touch of hand,
 Turn of head?
 Strange! that very way
 Love began
 I as little understand
 Love's decay.

III

When I sewed or drew,
 I recall
 How he looked as if I sang.
 —Sweetly too.
 If I spoke a word,
 First of all
 Up his cheek the colour sprang,
 Then he heard.

IV

Sitting by my side,
 At my feet,
 So he breathed the air I breathed,
 Satisfied!
 I, too, at love's brim
 Touched the sweet:
 I would die if death bequeathed
 Sweet to him.

V

"Speak, I love thee best!"
 He exclaimed.
 "Let thy love my own foretell,"
 I confessed:
 "Clasp my heart on thine
 Now unblamed,
 Since upon thy soul as well
 Hangeth mine!"

VI

Was it wrong to own,
 Being truth?
 Why should all the giving prove
 His alone?

I had wealth and ease,
 Beauty, youth
 Since my lover gave me love,
 I gave these.

VII

That was all I meant.
 To be just,
 And the passion I had raised
 To content.
 Since he chose to change
 Gold for dust,
 If I gave him what he praised
 Was it strange?

VIII

Would he loved me yet,
 On and on.
 While I found some way un-
 dreamed
 Paid my debt!
 Gave more life and more,
 Till, all gone,
 He should smile, "She never seemed
 Mine before.

IX

"What—she felt the while,
 Must I think?
 Love's so different with us men,"
 He should smile.
 "Dying for my sake
 White and pink!
 Can't we touch these bubbles then
 But they break?"

X

Dear, the pang is brief,
 Do thy part,
 Have thy pleasure. How perplex
 Grows belief!
 Well, this cold clay clod
 Was man's heart.
 Crumble it—and what comes next?
 Is it God?

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

I

THE morn when first it thunders in
March,
The eel in the pond gives a leap,
they say.
As I leaned and looked over the
aloed arch
Of the villa-gate, this warm March
day,
No flash snapt, no dumb thunder
rolled
In the valley beneath, where, white
and wide,
Washed by the morning's water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain-
side.

II

River and bridge and street and square
Lay mine, as much at my beck and
call,
Through the live translucent bath of
air,
As the sights in a magic crystal
ball.
And of all I saw and of all I praised,
The most to praise and the best to
see,
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto
raised:
But why did it more than startle
me?

III

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours.
Could you play me false who loved
you so?
Some slights if a certain heart endures
It feels, I would have your fellows
know!
Faith—I perceive not why I should
care
To break a silence that suits them
best,
But the thing grows somewhat hard
to bear
When I find a Giotto join the rest.

IV

On the arch where olives over-
head
Print the blue sky with twig and
leaf,
(That sharp-curved leaf they never
shed)
'Twixt the aloes I used to lean in
chief,
And mark through the winter after-
noons,
By a gift God grants me now and
then.
In the mild decline of those suns like
moons.
Who walked in Florence, besides
her men.

V

They might chirp and chatter, come
and go
For pleasure or profit, her men
alive—
My business was hardly with them, I
trow,
But with empty cells of the human
hive;
—With the chapter-room, the cloister-
porch,
The church's apsis, aisle or nave,
Its crypt, one fingers along with a
torch --
Its face set full for the sun to shave.

VI

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
Wherever an outline weakens and
waned
Till the latest life in the painting
stops,
Stands One whom each fainter
pulse-tick pains!
One, wishful each scrap should clutch
its brick,
Each tinge not wholly escape the
plaster,
—A lion who dies of an ass's kick,
The wronged great soul of an
ancient Master.

VII

For oh, this world and the wrong it
does!
They are safe in heaven with their
backs to it,
The Michaels and Rafiels, you hum
and buzz
Round the works of, you of the
little wit!
Do their eyes contract to the earth's
old scope
Now that they see God face to
face,
And have all attained to be poets, I
hope?
'Tis their holiday now, in any case.

VIII

Much they reckon of your praise and
you!
But the wronged great souls—can
they be quit
Of a world where all their work is
to do,
Where you style them, you of the
little wit,
Old Master this and Early the
other,
Not dreaming that Old and New
are fellows,
That a younger succeeds to an elder
brother,
Da Vincis derive in good time from
Dellos.

IX

And here where your praise would
yield returns
And a handsome word or two give
help,
Here, after your kind, the mastiff girns
And the puppy pack of poodles
yelp.
What, not a word for Stefano there
—Of brow once prominent and
starry,
Called Nature's ape and the world's
despair
For his peerless painting (see
Vasari)?

X

There he stands now. Study, my
friends,
What a man's work comes to! so
he plans it,
Performs it, perfects it, makes amends
For the toiling and moiling, and
there's its transit!
Happier the thrifty blind-folk labour,
With upturned eye while the hand
is busy,
Not sidling a glance at the coin of
their neighbour!
'Tis looking downward makes one
dizzy.

XI

If you knew their work you would
deal your dole.
May I take upon me to instruct
you?
When Greek Art ran and reached the
goal.
Thus much had the world to boast
in fructu—
The truth of Man, as by God first
spoken,
Which the actual generations garble,
Was re-uttered,—and Soul (which
Limbs betoken)
And Limbs (Soul inform.) were
made new in marble.

XII

So you saw yourself as you wished
you were,
As you might have been, as you
cannot be;
And bringing your own shortcomings
there,
You grew content in your poor
degree
With your little power, by those
statues' godhead,
And your little scope, by their eyes'
full sway,
And your little grace, by their grace
embodied,
And your little date, by their forms
that stay.

XIII

You would fain be kinglier, say than
I am?

Even so, you will not sit like
Theseus.

You'd fain be a model? the Son of
Priam

Has yet the advantage in arms' and
knees' use.

You're wroth—can you slay your
snake like Apollo?

You're grieved—still Niobe's the
grander!

You live—there's the Racers' frieze
to follow

You die—there's the dying Alex-
ander.

XIV

So, testing your weakness by their
strength,

Your meagre charms by their
rounded beauty,

Measured by Art in your breadth
and length,

You learn—to submit is the
worsted's duty.

--When I say "you" 'tis the com-
mon soul,

The collective, I mean--the race
of Man

That receives life in parts to live in
a whole.

And grow here according to God's
own plan.

XV

Growth came when, looking your
last on them all,

You turned your eyes inwardly one
fine day

And cried with a start—What if we
so small

Are greater, ay, greater the while
than they!

Are they perfect of lineament, perfect
of stature?

In both, of such lower types are we
Precisely because of our wider nature;

For time, theirs—ours, for eternity.

XVI

To-day's brief passion limits their
range.

It seethes with the morrow for us
and more.

They are perfect—how else? they
shall never change:

We are faulty—why not? we have
time in store.

The Artificer's hand is not arrested
With us—we are rough-hewn, no-
wise polished:

They stand for our copy, and, once
invested

With all they can teach, we shall
see them abolished.

XVII

'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be
leavened.

The better! what's come to per-
fection perishes.

Things learned on earth, we shall
practise in heaven:

Works done least rapidly, Art most
cherishes.

Thyself shall afford the example,
Giotto!

Thy one work, not to decrease or
diminish,

Done at a stroke, was just (was it
not?) "O!"

Thy great Campanile is still to
finish.

XVIII

Is it true, we are now, and shall be
hereafter.

And what—is depending on life's
one minute?

Hails heavenly cheer or infernal
laughter

Our first step out of the gulf or
in it?

And Man, this step within his en-
deavour.

His face, have no more play and
action

Than joy which is crystallised for
ever,

Or grief, an eternal petrification!

XIX

On which I conclude, that the early
painters,
To cries of "Greek Art and what
more wish you?"
Replied "Become now self-acquaint-
ers,
And paint man, man,—whatever
the issue!
Make the hopes shine through the
flesh they fray
New fears aggrandise the rags and
tatters.
So bring the invisible full into play.
Let the visible go to the dog—
what matters?"

XX

Give these, I say, full honour and
glory
For daring so much, before they
well did it.
The first of the new, in our race's
story,
Beats the last of the old, 'tis no
idle quiddit.
The worthies began a revolution
Which if on the earth we intend to
acknowledge
Honour them now—(ends my allo-
cution)
Nor confer our degree when the
folks leave college.

XXI

There's a fancy some lean to and
others hate—
That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another
state.
Where it strives and gets weary,
loses and wins
Where the strong and the weak, in this
world's congeries,
Repeat in large what they practised
in small.
Through life after life in unlimited
series:
Only the scale's to be changed,
that's all.

XXII

Yet I hardly know. When a soul
has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is
best,
And through earth and its noise, what
is heaven's serene,
When its faith in the same has
stood the test
Why, the child grown man, you burn
the rod,
The uses of labour are surely done.
There remaineth a rest for the people
of God,
And I have had troubles enough for
one.

XXIII

But at any rate I have loved the season
Of Art's spring-birth so dim and
dewy;
My sculptor is Nicolo the Pisan,
My painter—who but Cimabue?
Nor ever was man of them all indeed,
From these to Ghiberti and Ghir-
landajo,
Could say that he missed my critic-
meed.
So now to my special grievance
heigh-ho!

XXIV

Their ghosts now stand, as I said before,
Watching each fresco flaked and
rasped,
Blocked up, knocked out, or white-
washed o'er
No getting again what the church
has grasped!
The works on the wall must take their
chance,
"Works never conceded to Eng-
land's thick clime!"
(I hope they prefer their inheritance
Of a bucketful of Italian quick lime.)

XXV

When they go at length, with such a
shaking
Of heads o'er the old delusions, sadly
Each master his way through the black
streets taking,

Where many a lost work breathes
 though badly
 Why don't they bethink them of who
 has merited?
 Why not reveal, while their pictures
 die
 Such doom, that a captive's to be out-
 ferreted?
 Why do they never remember me?

XXVI

Not that I expect the great Bigordi
 Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric,
 bellicose;
 Nor wronged Lippino—and not a
 word I

Say of a scrap of Fra Angelico's,
 But are you too fine, Taddeo Gaddi,
 To grant me a taste of your in-
 tenaco—
 Some Jerome that seeks the heaven
 with a sad eye?
 No churlish saint, Lorenzo Monaco?

XXVII

Could not the ghost with the close
 red cap,
 My Pollajolo, the twice a craftsman,
 Save me a sample, give me the hap
 Of a muscular Christ that shows the
 draughtsman?
 No Virgin by him, the somewhat petty,
 Of finical touch and tempera
 crumbly—
 Could not Alesso Baldovinetti
 Contribute so much, I ask him
 humbly?

XXVIII

Margheritone of Arezzo,
 With the grave-clothes garb and
 swaddling barret,
 Why purse up mouth and beak in a
 pet so,
 You bald, saturnine, poll-clawed
 parrot?)
 No poor glimmering Crucifixion,
 Where in the foreground kneels the
 donor?
 If such remain, as is my conviction,
 The hoarding does you but little
 honour.

XXIX

They pass: for them the panels may
 thrill,
 The tempera grow alive and ting-
 lish—
 Rot or are left to the mercies still
 Of dealers and stealers, Jews and
 the English!
 Seeing mere money's worth in their
 prize,
 Who sell it to some one calm as
 Zeno
 At naked Art, and in ecstasies
 Before some clay-cold vile Carlino!

XXX

No matter for these! But Giotto, you,
 Have you allowed, as the town-
 tongues babble it,
 Never! it shall not be counted true—
 That a certain precious little tablet
 Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover,
 Buried so long in oblivion's womb,
 Was left for another than I to dis-
 cover—
 Turns up at last, and to whom?—
 to whom?

XXXI

I, that have haunted the dim San
 Spirito,
 (Or was it rather the Ognissanti?)
 Stood on the altar-steps, patient and
 weary too!
 Nay, I shall have it yet, *detur
 amanti!*
 My Koh-i-noor—or (if that's a plati-
 tude)
 Jewel of Giamschid, the Persian
 Sofi's eye!
 So, in anticipative gratitude,
 What if I take up my hope and
 prophecy?

XXXII

When the hour is ripe, and a certain
 dotard
 Pitched, no parcel that needs in-
 voicing,
 To the worse side of the Mont St.
 Gothard,
 Have, to begin by way of rejoicing,

IN A BALCONY

671

None of that shooting the sky (blank
cartridge),
No civic guards, all plumes and
lacquer,
Hunting Radetzky's soul like a part-
ridge
Over Morello with squib and
cracker.

XXXIII

We'll shoot this time better game
and bag 'em hot -
No display at the stone of Dante,
But a kind of Witan-agemot
("Casa Guidi," quod videas ante)
To ponder Freedom restored to
Florence,
How Art may return that departed
with her.
Go, hated house, go each trace of the
Lorraine's !
And bring us the days of Orgagna
hither.

XXXIV

How we shall prologue, how we
shall perorate,
Say fit things upon art and history—
Set truth at blood-heat and the false
at a zero rate,
Make of the want of the age no
mystery !
Contrast the fructuous and sterile eras.
Show, monarchy its uncouth cub
licks
Out of the bear's shape to the chim-
era's
Pure Art's birth being still the
republic's !

XXXV

Then one shall propose (in a speech,
curt Tuscan,
Sober, expurgate, spare of an
"issimo,")
Ending our half-told tale of Cam-
buscan,
Turning the Bell-tower's altal-
tissimo.

And fine as the beak of a young
beccaccia
The Campanile, the Duomo's fit
ally,
Soars up in gold its full fifty braccia,
Completing Florence, as Florence,
Italy

XXXVI

Shall I be alive that morning the
scaffold
Is broken away, and the long-pent
fire
Like the golden hope of the world
unbattled
Springs from its sleep, and up goes
the spire—
As, "God and the People" plan for
its motto,
Thence the new tricolor flaps at
the sky?
Foreseeing the day that vindicates
Giotto
And Florence together, the first
am I !

IN A BALCONY

FIRST PART

CONSTANCE and NORBERT

NORBERT

Now.

CONSTANCE

Not now.

NORBERT

Give me them

again, those hands—

Put them upon my forehead, how it
throbs !

Press them before my eyes, the fire
comes through.

You cruellest, you dearest in the
world,

Let me! the Queen must grant
whate'er I ask

How can I gain you and not ask the
Queen?

There she stays waiting for me, here
stand you.

Some time or other this was to be
asked,

Now is the one time--what I ask, I
gain--

Let me ask now, Love!

CONSTANCE

Do, and ruin us.

NORBERT

Let it be now, Love! All my soul
breaks forth.

How I do love you! give my love
its way!

A man can have but one life and one
death,

One heaven, one hell. Let me fulfil
my fate--

Grant me my heaven now. Let me
know you mine,

Prove you mine, write my name
upon your brow,

Hold you and have you, and then
die away

If God please, with completion in my
soul.

CONSTANCE

I am not yours then? how content
this man?

I am not his, who change into him-
self,

Have passed into his heart and beat
its beats,

Who give my hands to him, my eyes,
my hair,

Give all that was of me away to him
So well, that now, my spirit turned
his own,

Takes part with him against the
woman here,

Bids him not stumble at so mere a
straw

As caring that the world be cognisant
How he loves her and how she
worships him.

You have this woman, not as yet
that world.

Go on, I bid, nor stop to care for me
By saving what I cease to care
about,

The courtly name and pride of
circumstance--

The name you'll pick up and be
cumbered with

Just for the poor parade's sake,
nothing more:

Just that the world may slip from
under you

Just that the world may cry "So
much for him

The man predestined to the heap of
crowns!

There goes his chance of winning
one, at least."

NORBERT

The world!

CONSTANCE

You love it. Love me
quite as well,

And see if I shall pray for this in
vain!

Why must you ponder what it knows
or thinks?

NORBERT

You pray for what, in vain?

CONSTANCE

Oh my heart's heart,

How I do love you, Norbert!--that
is right!

But listen, or I take my hands away.

You say, "let it be now"--you
would go now

And tell the Queen, perhaps six steps
from us,

You love me--so you do, thank God!

NORBERT

Thank God!

CONSTANCE

Yes, Norbert,--but you fain would
tell your love,

And, what succeeds the telling, ask
of her

My hand. Now take this rose and
look at it,
Listening to me. You are the
minister,
The Queen's first favourite, not
without a can.
To-night completes your wonderful
year's-work
(This palace-feast is held to celebrate)
Made memorable by her life's success,
That junction of two crowns on her
sole head
Her house had only dreamed of
anciently.
That this mere dream is grown a
stable truth
To-night's feast makes authentic.
Whose the praise?
Whose genius, patience, energy,
achieved
What turned the many heads and
broke the hearts?
You are the fate—your minute's in
the heaven.
Next comes the Queen's turn. Name
your own reward!
With leave to clench the past, chain
the to-come,
Put out an arm and touch and take
the sun
And fix it ever full-faced on your earth,
Possess yourself supremely of her life,
You choose the single thing she will
not grant—
The very declaration of which choice
Will turn the scale and neutralise
your work.
At best she will forgive you, if she
can.
You think I'll let you choose—her
cousin's hand?

NORBERT

Wait. First, do you retain your old
belief
The Queen is generous,—nay, is just?

CONSTANCE

There, there!
So men make women love them, while
they know

No more of women's hearts than . . .
look you her . . .
You that are just and generous beside,
Make it your own case. For example
now,
I'll say—I let you kiss me and hold
my hands
Why? do you know why? I'll instruct
you, then
The kiss, because you have a name at
court,
This hand and this, that you may shut
in each
A jewel, if you please to pick up such.
That's horrible! Apply it to the
Queen
Suppose I am the Queen to whom
you speak.
"I was a nameless man: you needed
me
Why did I proffer you my aid? there
stood
A certain pretty cousin at your side.
Why did I make such common cause
with you?
Access to her had not been easy else.
You give my labours here abundant
praise:
'Faith, labour, while she overlooked,
grew play.
How shall your gratitude discharge
itself?
Give me her hand!"

NORBERT

And still I urge the same.
Is the Queen just? just—generous or
no?

CONSTANCE

Yes, just. You love a rose—no harm
in that
But was it for the rose's sake or mine
You put it in your bosom? mine, you
said—
Then mine you still must say or else
be false.
You told the Queen you served her
for herself:
If so, to serve her w to serve your-
self,

She thinks, for all your unbelieving
 face!
 I know her. In the hall, six steps
 from us,
 One sees the twenty pictures—there's
 a life
 Better than life—and yet no life at all;
 Conceive her born in such a magic
 dome,
 Pictures all round her! why, she sees
 the world,
 Can recognise its given things and
 facts,
 The fight of giants or the feast of
 gods,
 Sages in senate, beauties at the bath,
 Chances and battles, the whole earth's
 display,
 Landscape and sea-piece, down to
 flowers and fruit—
 And who shall question that she
 knows them all
 In better semblance than the things
 outside?
 Yet bring into the silent gallery
 Some live thing to contrast in breath
 and blood,
 Some lion, with the painted lion
 there—
 You think she'll understand com-
 posedly?
 —Say, "that's his fellow in the
 hunting-piece
 Yonder. I've turned to praise a
 hundred times?"
 Not so. Her knowledge of our actual
 earth.
 Its hopes and fears, concerns and
 sympathies,
 Must be too far, too mediate, too
 unreal
 The real exists for us outside, not
 her—
 How should it, with that life in these
 four walls,
 That father and that mother, first to
 last
 No father and no mother—friends,
 a heap.
 Lovers, no lack—a husband in due
 time
 And every one of them alike a lie!

Things painted by a Rubens out of
 nought
 Into what kindness, friendship, love
 should be;
 All better, all more grandiose than
 life,
 Only no life: mere cloth and surface-
 paint
 You feel while you admire. How
 should she feel?
 And now that she has stood thus fifty
 years
 The sole spectator in that gallery,
 You think to bring this warm real
 struggling love
 In to her of a sudden, and suppose
 She'll keep her state untroubled?
 Here's the truth
 She'll apprehend its value at a glance,
 Prefer it to the pictured loyalty!
 You only have to say "so men are
 made,
 For this they act, the thing has many
 names
 But this the right one—and now,
 Queen, be just!"
 And life slips back—you lose her at
 the word—
 You do not even for amends gain me.
 He will not understand! oh, Norbert,
 Norbert,
 Do you not understand?

NORBERT

The Queen's the Queen.
 I am myself no picture, but alive
 In every nerve and every muscle,
 here
 At the palace-window or in the people's
 street,
 As she in the gallery where the
 pictures glow,
 The good of life is precious to us
 both.
 She cannot love—what do I want
 with rule?
 When first I saw your face a year ago
 I knew my life's good—my soul heard
 one voice
 "The woman yonder, there's no use
 of life

But just to obtain her ! heap earth's
woes in one
And bear them—make a pile of all
earth's joys
And spurn them, as they help or help
not here ;
Only, obtain her !"—How was it to
be ?
I found she was the cousin of the
Queen :
I must then serve the Queen to get
her—
No other way. Suppose there had
been one.
And I by saying prayers to some
white star
With promise of my body and my
soul
Might gain you,—should I pray the
star or no ?
Instead, there was the Queen to serve !
I served,
And did what other servants failed
to do.
Neither she sought nor I declared
my end.
Her good is hers, my recompense be
mine.
And let me name you as that recom-
pense.
She dreamed that such a thing could
never be ?
Let her wake now. She thinks there
was some cause—
The love of power, of fame, pure
loyalty ?
—Perhaps she fancies men wear out
their lives
Chasing such shades. Then I've a
fancy too.
I worked because I want you with
my soul—
I therefore ask your hand. Let it be
now.

CONSTANCE

Had I not loved you from the very
first.
Were I not yours, could we not steal
out thus
So wickedly, so wildly, and so well,

You might be thus impatient. What's
conceived
Of us without here, by the folks
within ?
Where are you now ?—immersed in
cares of state
Where am I now ?—intent on festal
robes—
We two, embracing under death's
spread hand !
What was this thought for, what
this scruple of yours
Which broke the council up, to bring
about
One minute's meeting in the corridor ?
And then the sudden sleights, long
secrecies,
The plots inscrutable, deep telegraphs,
Long - planned - chance - meetings,
hazards of a look,
"Does she know? does she not
know? saved or lost?"
A year of this compression's ecstasy
All goes for nothing? you would give
this up
For the old way, the open way, the
world's,
His way who beats, and his who sells
his wife ?
What tempts you? their notorious
happiness,
That you're ashamed of ours? The
best you'll get
Will be, the Queen grants all that
you require.
Concedes the cousin, and gets rid of
you
And her at once, and gives us ample
leave
To live as our five hundred happy
friends.
The world will show us with officious
hand
Our chamber-entry and stand sentinel,
When we so oft have stolen across
her traps !
Get the world's warrant, ring the
falcon's foot,
And make it duty to be bold and
swift,
When long ago 'twas nature. Have
it so !

He never hawked by rights till flung
from fist?

Oh, the man's thought!—no woman's
such a fool.

NORBERT

Yes, the man's thought and my
thought, which is more

One made to love you, let the world
take note.

I have I done worthy work? be love's
the praise,

Though hampered by restrictions,
barred against

By set forms, blinded by forced
secrecies.

Set free my love, and see what love
will do

Shown in my life—what work will
spring from that!

The world is used to have its business
done

On other grounds, find great effects
produced

For power's sake, fame's sake, motives
you have named.

So good. But let my low ground
shame their high.

Truth is the strong thing. Let man's
life be true!

And love's the truth of mine. Time
prove the rest!

I choose to have you stamped all over
me,

Your name upon my forehead and
my breast,

You, from the sword's blade to the
ribbon's edge,

That men may see all over, you in
me—

That pale loves may die out of their
pretence

In face of mine, shames thrown on
love fall off—

Permit this, Constance! Love has
been so long

Subdued in me, eating me through
and through,

That now it's all of me and must have
way.

Think of my work, that chaos of
intrigues,

Those hopes and fears, surprises and
delays,

That long endeavour, earnest, patient,
slow,

Trembling at last to its assured
result

Then think of this revulsion! I
resume

Life after death, (it is no less than
life,

After such long unlovely labouring
days)

And liberate to beauty life's great
need

Of the beautiful, which, while it
prompted work,

Suppress itself erewhile. This eve's
the time—

This eve intense with yon first
trembling star

We seem to pant and reach; scarce
aught between

The earth that rises and the heaven
that bends

All nature self-abandoned—every tree
Flung as it will, pursuing its own

thoughts

And fixed so, every flower and every
weed,

No pride, no shame, no victory, no
defeat:

All under God, each measured by
itself!

These statues round us, each abrupt,
distinct,

The strong in strength, the weak in
weakness fixed,

The Muse for ever wedded to her
lyre,

The Nymph to her fawn, the Silence
to her rose,

And God's approval on his universe!

Let us do so—aspire to live as these
In harmony with truth, ourselves
being true,

Take the first way, and let the second
come.

My first is to possess myself of you;
The music sets the march-step—
forward then!

And there's the Queen, I go to claim
you of,

The world to witness, wonder and
applaud.
Our flower of life breaks open. No
delay!

CONSTANCE

And so shall we be ruined, both of us.
Norbert, I know her to the skin and
bone—
You do not know her, were not born
to it,
To feel what she can see or cannot
see.
Love, she is generous,—ay, despite
your smile,
Generous as you are. For, in that
thin frame
Pain-twisted, punctured through and
through with cares,
There lived a lavish soul until it
starved,
Debarred all healthy food. Look to
the soul—
Pity that, stoop to that, ere you begin
(The true man's way) on justice and
your rights,
Exactions and acquittance of the past.
Begin so—see what justice she will
deal!
We women hate a debt as men a gift.
Suppose her some poor keeper of a
school
Whose business is to sit thro' summer-
months
And dole out children's leave to go
and play,
Herself superior to such lightness—
she
In the arm-chair's state and pæda-
gogic pomp,
To the life, the laughter, sun and
youth outside
We wonder such an one looks black
on us?
I do not bid you wake her tenderness,
—That were vain truly—none is left
to wake—
But let her think her justice is engaged
To take the shape of tenderness, and
mark
If she'll not coldly do its warmest
deed!

Does she love me, I ask you? not a
whit.
Yet, thinking that her justice was
engaged
To help a kinswoman, she took me
up
Did more on that bare ground than
other loves
Would do on greater argument. For
me,
I have no equivalent of that cold kind
To pay her with; my love alone to
give
If I give anything I give her love.
I feel I ought to help her, and I
will,
So for her sake, as yours, I tell you
twice
That women hate a debt as men a gift.
If I were you, I could obtain this
grace—
Would lay the whole I did to love's
account,
Nor yet be very false as courtiers go
Declare that my success was recom-
pense;
It would be so, in fact: what were it
else?
And then, once loosed her generosity
As you will mark it—then,—were I
but you
To turn it, let it seem to move itself,
And make it give the thing I really
take,
Accepting so, in the poor cousin's
hand.
All value as the next thing to the
Queen
Since none loves her directly, none
dares that!
A shadow of a thing, a name's mere
echo
Suffices those who miss the name and
thing;
You pick up just a ribbon she has
worn
To keep in proof how near her breath
you came.
Say I'm so near I seem a piece of
her—
Ask for me that way—(oh, you under-
stand)

And find the same gift yielded with a
grace,
Which if you make the least show to
extort
You'll see! and when you have
ruined both of us,
Dissertate on the Queen's ingratitude!

NORBERT

Then, if I turn it that way, you
consent?
'Tis not my way; I have more hope
in truth,
Still, if you won't have truth—why,
this indeed,
Is scarcely false, I'll so express the
sense.
Will you remain here?

CONSTANCE

O best heart of mine,
How I have loved you! then, you
take my way?
Are mine as you have been her
minister,
Work out my thought, give it effect
for me,
Paint plain my poor conceit and make
it serve?
I owe that withered woman every-
thing
Life, fortune, you, remember! Take
my part—
Help me to pay her! Stand upon
your rights?
You, with my rose, my hands, my
heart on you?
Your rights are mine—you have no
rights but mine.

NORBERT

Remain here. How you know me!

CONSTANCE

Ah, but still—

*[He breaks from her: she remains.
Dance-music from within.]*

SECOND PART

Enter the QUEEN

QUEEN

Constance!—She is here as he said.
Speak! quick!
Is it so? is it true—or false? One
word!

CONSTANCE

True.

QUEEN

Mercifullest Mother, thanks to thee!

CONSTANCE

Madam!

QUEEN

I love you, Constance, from
my soul.
Now say once more, with any words
you will,
'Tis true—all true—as true as that I
speak.

CONSTANCE

Why should you doubt it?

QUEEN

Ah, why doubt? why doubt?
Dear, make me see it. Do you see
it so?
None see themselves—another sees
them best.
You say "why doubt it?"—you see
him and me.
It is because the Mother has such
grace
That if we had but faith—wherein we
fail—
Whate'er we yearn for would be
granted us;
Howbeit we let our whims prescribe
despair,
Our very fancies thwart and cramp
our will,

And so accepting life, abjure ourselves!
Constance, I had abjured the hope of
love
And of being loved, as truly as you
palm
The hope of seeing Egypt from that
turf.

CONSTANCE

Heaven!

QUEEN

But it was so, Constance,
it was so.
Men say—or do men say it? fancies
say—
“Stop here, your life is set, you are
grown old.
Too late—no love for you, too late
for love—
Leave love to girls. Be queen—let
Constance love!”
One takes the hint—half meets it
like a child,
Ashamed at any feelings that oppose.
“Oh, love, true, never think of love
again!
I am a queen—I rule, not love,
indeed.”
So it goes on; so a face grows like
this,
Hair like this hair, poor arms as lean
as these,
Till,—nay, it does not end so, I thank
God!

CONSTANCE

I cannot understand—

QUEEN

The happier you!
Constance, I know not how it is with
men.
For women, (I am a woman now like
you)
There is no good of life but love—
but love!
What else looks good, is some shade
flung from love—
Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be
warned by me,

Never you cheat yourself one instant.
Love.

Give love, ask only love, and leave
the rest!

O Constance, how I love you!

CONSTANCE

I love you.

QUEEN

I do believe that all is come through
you.

I took you to my heart to keep it
warm

When the last chance of love seemed
dead in me:

I thought your fresh youth warmed
my withered heart.

Oh, I am very old now, am I not?

Not so! it is true, and it shall be
true!

CONSTANCE

Tell it me! let me judge if true or
false.

QUEEN

Ah, but I fear you—you will look at
me

And say “she’s old, she’s grown un-
lovely quite

Who ne’er was beauteous! men want
beauty still.”

Well, so I feared—the curse! so I
felt sure.

CONSTANCE

Be calm. And now you feel not sure,
you say?

QUEEN

Constance, he came, the coming was
not strange—

Do not I stand and see men come
and go?

I turned a half-look from my pedestal
Where I grow marble—“one young
man the more!

He will love some one,—that is
nought to me—

What would he with my marble
stateliness?"
Yet this seemed somewhat worse than
heretofore;
The man more gracious, youthful, like
a god,
And I still older, with less flesh to
change
We two those dear extremes that long
to touch.
It seemed still harder when he first
began
Absorbed to labour at the state-affairs
The old way for the old end, interest.
Oh, to live with a thousand beating
hearts
Around you, swift eyes, serviceable
hands,
Professing they've no care but for
your cause,
Thought but to help you, love but for
yourself,
And you the marble statue all the
time
They praise and point at as preferred
to life,
Yet leave for the first breathing
woman's choice,
First dancer's, gypsy's, or street bala-
dine's!
Why, how I have ground my teeth to
hear men's speech
Stuffed for fear it should alarm my ear.
Their gait subdued lest step should
startle me,
Their eyes declined, such queenhood
to respect,
Their hands alert, such treasure to
preserve,
While not a man of these broke rank
and spoke,
Or wrote me a vulgar letter all of love,
Or caught my hand and pressed it
like a hand.
There have been moments, if the
sentinel
Lowering his halbert to salute the
queen,
Had flung it brutally and clasped my
knees.
I would have stooped and kissed him
with my soul.

CONSTANCE

Who could have comprehended!

QUEEN

Ay, who—who?

Why, no one, Constance, but this one
who did.

Not they, not you, not I. Even now
perhaps

It comes too late—would you but tell
the truth.

CONSTANCE

I was to tell it.

QUEEN

Well, you see, he came,

Outfaced the others, did a work this
year

Exceeds in value all was ever done,

You know—it is not I who say it all
Say it. And so (a second pang and
worse)

I grew aware not only of what he did,

But why so wondrously. Oh, never
work

Like his was done for work's ignoble
sake

It must have finer aims to spur it on!

I felt, I saw he loved—loved some-
body.

And Constance, my dear Constance,
do you know,

I did believe this while twas you he
loved.

CONSTANCE

Me, madam?

QUEEN

It did seem to me your face

Met him where'er he looked: and
whom too you

Was such a man to love? it seemed
to me

You saw he loved you, and approved
the love,

And that you both were in intelligence.

You could not loiter in the garden,
step

Into this balcony, but I straight was
 stung
 And forced to understand. It seemed
 so true,
 So right, so beautiful, so like you
 both
 That all this work should have been
 done by him
 Not for the vulgar hope of recom-
 pense,
 But that at last—suppose some night
 like this—
 Borne on to claim his due reward
 of me
 He might say, "Give her hand and
 pay me so."
 And I (O Constance, you shall love
 me now)
 I thought, surmounting all the bitter-
 ness,
 —"And he shall have it. I will
 make her blest,
 My flower of youth, my woman's self
 that was,
 My happiest woman's self that might
 have been!
 These two shall have their joy and
 leave me here."
 Yes—yes—

CONSTANCE

Thanks!

QUEEN

And the word was on my lips
 When he burst in upon me—looked
 to hear
 A mere calm statement of his just
 desire
 In payment of his labour. When, O
 Heaven,
 How can I tell you? cloud was on
 my eyes
 And thunder in my ears at that first
 word
 Which told 'twas love of me, of me,
 did all—
 He loved me—from the first step to
 the last,
 Loved me!

CONSTANCE

You did not hear . . . you
 thought he spoke
 Of love? what if you should mistake?

QUEEN

No, no—
 No mistake! Ha, there shall be no
 mistake.
 He had not dared to hint the love he
 felt—
 You were my reflex—how I under-
 stood!
 He said you were the ribbon I had
 worn,
 He kissed my hand, he looked into
 my eyes,
 And love, love was the end of every
 phrase.
 Love is begun—this much is come to
 pass,
 The rest is easy. Constance, I am
 yours—
 I will learn, I will place my life on
 you,
 But teach me how to keep what I
 have won.
 Am I so old? this hair was early grey;
 And joy ere now has brought hair
 brown again,
 And joy will bring the cheek's red
 back, I feel.
 I could sing once too; that was in
 my youth.
 Still, when men paint me, they
 declare me . . . yes,
 Beautiful—for the last French painter
 did!
 I know they flatter somewhat; you
 are frank—
 I trust you. How I loved you from
 the first!
 Some queens would hardly seek a
 cousin out
 And set her by their side to take the
 eye:
 I must have felt that good would
 come from you.
 I am not generous—like him—like
 you!
 But he is not your lover after all—

It was not you he looked at. Saw
you him?
You have not been mistaking words
or looks?
He said you were the reflex of my-
self—
And yet he is not such a paragon
To you, to younger women who may
choose
Among a thousand Norberts. Speak
the truth!
You know you never named his name
to me—
You know, I cannot give him up—
ah God,
Not up now, even to you!

CONSTANCE

Then calm yourself.

QUEEN

See, I am old—look here, you happy
girl,
I will not play the fool, deceive
myself;
'Tis all gone—put your cheek beside
my cheek—
Ah, what a contrast does the moon
behold!
But then I set my life upon one chance,
The last chance and the best—am /
not left,
My soul, myself? All women love
great men
If young or old—it is in all the tales—
Young beauties love old poets who
can love—
Why should not he the poems in my
soul,
The love, the passionate faith, the
sacrifice,
The constancy? I throw them at his
feet.
Who cares to see the fountain's very
shape
And whether it be a Triton's or a
Nymph's
That pours the foam, makes rainbows
all around?
You could not praise indeed the empty
couch;

But I'll pour floods of love and hide
myself.
How I will love him! cannot men
love love?
Who was a queen and loved a poet
once
Humpbacked, a dwarf? ah, women
can do that?
Well, but men too! at least, they tell
you so.
They love so many women in their
youth,
And even in age they all love whom
they please;
And yet the best of them confide to
friends
That 'tis not beauty makes the lasting
love—
They spend a day with such and tire
the next:
They like soul, well then, they like
phantasy,
Novelty even. Let us confess the
truth
Horrible though it be that prejudice,
Prescription . . . Curses! they will
love a queen.
They will—they do. And will not,
does not—he?

CONSTANCE

How can he? You are wedded—'tis
a name
We know, but still a bond. Your
rank remains,
His rank remains. How can he, nobly
souled
As you believe and I incline to think,
Aspire to be your favourite, shame
and all?

QUEEN

Hear her! there, there now—could
she love like me?
What did I say of smooth-cheeked
youth and grace?
See all it does or could do! so, youth
loves!
Oh, tell him, Constance, you could
never do
What I will—you, it was not born
in! I

Will drive these difficulties far and
fast
As yonder mists curdling before the
moon.
I'll use my light too, gloriously retrieve
My youth from its enforced calamity,
Dissolve that hateful marriage, and be
his,
His own in the eyes alike of God and
man.

CONSTANCE

You will do—dare do—Pause on what
you say !

QUEEN

Hear her ! I thank you, Sweet, for
that surprise.
You have the fair face : for the soul,
see mine !
I have the strong soul : let me teach
you, here.
I think I have borne enough and long
enough,
And patiently enough, the world's
remarks,
To have my own way now, unblamed
by all.
It does so happen, I rejoice for it,
This most unhopèd-for issue cuts the
knot.
There's not a better way of settling
claims
Than this ; God sends the accident
express ;
And were it for my subjects' good, no
re,
'Twere best thus ordered. I am
thankful now,
Mute, passive, acquiescent. I receive,
And bless God simply, or should
almost fear
To walk so smoothly to my ends at
last.
Why, how I baffle obstacles, spurn
fate !
How strong I am ! could Norbert see
me now !

CONSTANCE

Let me consider. It is all too strange.

QUEEN

You, Constance, learn of me ; do you,
like me.
You are young, beautiful : my own,
best girl,
You will have many lovers, and love
one—
Light hair, not hair like Norbert's,
to suit yours,
And taller than he is, for you are tall.
Love him like me ! give all away to
him ;
Think never of yourself ; throw by
your pride,
Hope, fear, —your own good as you
saw it once
And love him simply for his very self.
Remember, I (and what am I to you ?)
Would give up all for one, leave
throne, lose life,
Do all but just unlove him ! he loves
me.

CONSTANCE

He shall.

QUEEN

You, step inside my inmost heart.
Give me your own heart—let us have
one heart—
I'll come to you for counsel ; "This
he says,
This he does, what should this
amount to, pray ?
Beseech you, change it into current
coin.
Is that worth kisses ? shall I please
him there ?"
And then we'll speak in turn of you—
what else ?
Your love (according to your beauty's
worth)
For you shall have some noble love,
all gold—
Whom choose you ? we will get him
at your choice.
—Constance, I leave you. Just a
minute since
I felt as I must die or be alone
Breathing my soul into an ear like
yours.

Now, I would face the world with
 my new life,
 With my new crown. I'll walk
 around the rooms,
 And then come back and tell you
 how it feels.
 How soon a smile of God can change
 the world!
 How we are all made for happiness
 how work
 Grows play, adversity a winning
 fight!
 True, I have lost so many years.
 What then?
 Many remain—God has been very
 good.
 You, stay here. 'Tis as different
 from dreams,—
 From the mind's cold calm estimate
 of bliss,
 As these stone statues from the flesh
 and blood.
 The comfort thou hast caused man-
 kind, God's moon!
*[She goes out. Dance-music from
 within.]*

PART THIRD

NORBERT *enters.*

NORBERT

Well! we have but one minute and
 one word—

CONSTANCE

I am yours, Norbert!

NORBERT

Yes, mine.

CONSTANCE

Not till now!
 You were mine. Now I give myself
 to you.

NORBERT

Constance!

CONSTANCE

Your own! I know the
 thriftier way
 Of giving—haply, 'tis the wiser way.
 Meaning to give a treasure, I might
 dole
 Coin after coin out (each, as that
 were all.
 With a new largess still at each
 despair)
 And force you keep in sight the deed,
 reserve
 Exhaustless till the end my part and
 yours,
 My giving and your taking, both our
 joys
 Dying together. Is it the wiser way?
 I choose the simpler; I give all at
 once.
 Know what you have to trust to,
 trade upon.
 Use it, abuse it, anything but say
 Hereafter, "Had I known she loved
 me so,
 And what my means, I might have
 thriven with it."
 This is your means. I give you all
 myself.

NORBERT

I take you and thank God.

CONSTANCE

Look on through years!
 We cannot kiss a second day like this,
 Else were this earth, no earth.

NORBERT

With this day's heat
 We shall go on through years of cold

CONSTANCE

So best.
 I try to see those years—I think I see.
 You walk quick and new warmth
 comes; you look back
 And lay all to the first glow—not sit
 down
 For ever brooding on a day like this
 While seeing the embers whiten and
 love die.

Yes, love lives best in its effect : and
mine.
Full in its own life, yearns to live in
yours.

NORBERT

Just so. I take and know you all at
once.
Your soul is disengaged so easily,
Your face is there, I know you ; give
me time,
Let me be proud and think you shall
know me.
My soul is slower : in a life I roll
The minute out in which you condense
yours
The whole slow circle round you I
must move.
To be just you. I look to a long life
To decompose this minute, prove its
worth.
'Tis the sparks' long succession one
by one
Shall show you in the end what fire
was crammed
In that mere stone you struck : you
could not know,
If it lay ever unproved in your sight,
As now my heart lies? your own
warmth would hide
Its coldness, were it cold.

CONSTANCE

But how prove, how ?

NORBERT

Prove in my life, you ask ?

CONSTANCE

Quick, Norbert—how ?

NORBERT

That's easy told. I count life just a
stuff
To try the soul's strength on, educe
the man.
Who keeps one end in view makes
all things serve.
As with the body—he who hurls a
lance

Or heaps up stone on stone, shows
strength alike,
So I will seize and use all means to
prove
And show this soul of mine you crown
as yours,
And justify us both.

CONSTANCE

Could you write books,
Paint pictures! one sits down in
poverty
And writes or paints, with pity for
the rich.

NORBERT

And loves one's painting and one's
writing too,
And not one's mistress! All is best,
believe,
And we best as no other than we are.
We live, and they experiment on life
Those poets, painters, all who stand
aloof
To overlook the farther. Let us be
The thing they look at! I might
take that face
And write of it and paint it—to what
end?
For whom? what pale dictatress in
the air
Feeds, smiling sadly, her fine ghost-
like form
With earth's real blood and breath,
the beauteous life
She makes despised for ever? You
are mine,
Made for me, not for others in the
world.
Nor yet for that which I should call
my art,
That cold calm power to see how fair
you look.
I come to you—I leave you not, to
write
Or paint. You are, I am. Let
Rubens there
Paint us.

CONSTANCE

So best !

NORBERT

I understand your soul.
 You live, and rightly sympathise with
 life,
 With action, power, success: this
 way is straight.
 And days were short beside, to let me
 change
 The craft my childhood learnt: my
 craft shall serve.
 Men set me here to subjugate, enclose,
 Manure their barren lives and force
 the fruit
 First for themselves, and afterward
 for me
 In the due tithe; the task of some
 one man,
 By ways of work appointed by them-
 selves.
 I am not bid create, they see no star
 Transfiguring my brow to warrant
 that
 But bind in one and carry out their
 wills.
 So I began: to-night sees how I end.
 What if it see, too, my first outbreak
 here
 Amid the warmth, surprise and sym-
 pathy,
 The instincts of the heart that teach
 the head?
 What if the people have discerned in
 me
 The dawn of the next nature, the new
 man
 Whose will they venture in the place
 of theirs,
 And whom they trust to find them-
 out new ways
 To the new heights which yet he only
 sees?
 I felt it when you kissed me. See
 this Queen,
 This people—in our phrase, this mass
 of men—
 See how the mass lies passive to my
 hand
 And how my hand is plastic, and you
 by
 To make the muscles iron! Oh, an
 end

Shall crown this issue as this crowns
 the first

My will be on this people! then, the
 strain,

The grappling of the potter with his
 clay.

The long uncertain struggle,—the
 success

In that uprising of the spirit-work.

The vase shaped to the curl of the
 god's lip.

While rounded fair for lower men to
 see

The Graces in a dance they recognise
 With turbulent applause and laughs
 of heart!

So triumph ever shall renew itself;
 Ever to end in efforts higher yet,
 Ever begun—

CONSTANCE

I ever helping?

NORBERT

Thus!

[As he embraces her, enter the
 QUEEN.

CONSTANCE

Hist, madam—so I have performed
 my part.

You see your gratitude's true decency,
 Norbert? a little slow in seeing it!
 Begun to end the sooner. What's a
 kiss?

NORBERT

Constance!

CONSTANCE

Why, must I teach it you again?
 You want a witness to your dullness,
 sir?

What was I saying this ten minutes
 long?

Then I repeat—when some young
 handsome man

Like you has acted out a part like
 yours,

Is pleased to fall in love with one
 beyond.

So very far beyond him, as he say
 So hopelessly in love, that but
 speak
 Would prove him mad, he thinks
 judiciously,
 And makes some insignificant good
 soul
 Like me, his friend, adviser, confidant
 And very stalking-horse to cover him
 In following after what he dares not
 face
 When his end's gained—(sir, do you
 understand?)
 When she, he dares not face, has
 loved him first,
 May I not say so, madam?—tops
 his hope,
 And overpasses so his wildest dream.
 With glad consent of all, and most
 of her
 The confidant who brought the same
 about
 Why, in the moment when such joy
 explodes,
 I do say that the merest gentleman
 Will not start rudely from the stalk-
 ing-horse,
 Dismiss it with a "There, enough of
 you!"
 Forget it, show his back unmannerly;
 But like a liberal heart will rather
 turn
 And say, "A tingling time of hope
 was ours
 Betwixt the fears and falterings—we
 two lived
 A chanceful time in waiting for the
 prize.
 The confidant, the Constance, served
 not ill:
 And though I shall forget her in due
 time,
 Her use being answered now, as
 reason bids,
 Nay as herself bids from her heart of
 hearts,
 Still, she has rights, the first thanks
 go to her.
 The first good praise goes to the
 prosperous tool,
 And the first—which is the last—
 thankful kiss."

NORBERT

Constance! it is a dream—ah, see,
 you smile!

CONSTANCE

So, now his part being properly per-
 formed,
 Madam, I turn to you and finish mine
 As duly—I do justice in my turn.
 Yes, madam, he has loved you long
 and well
 He could not hope to tell you so—
 'twas I
 Who served to prove your soul ac-
 cessible.
 I led his thoughts on, drew them to
 their place,
 When oft they had wandered out into
 despair,
 And kept love constant toward it,
 natural aim.
 Enough—my part is played; you
 stoop half-way
 And meet us royally and spare our
 fears
 'Tis like yourself—he thanks you, so
 do I.
 Take him—with my full heart! my
 work is praised
 By what comes of it. Be you happy,
 both!
 Yourself—the only one on earth who
 can—
 Do all for him, much more than a
 mere heart
 Which though warm is not useful in
 its warmth
 As the silk vesture of a queen! fold
 that
 Around him gently, tenderly. For
 him—
 For him,—he knows his own part.

NORBERT

Have you done?

I take the jest at last. Should I
 speak now?
 Was yours the wager, Constance,
 foolish child.
 Or did you but accept it? Well—at
 least,
 You lose by it.

CONSTANCE

Now, madam, 'tis your turn.
 Restrain him still from speech a
 little more
 And make him happier and more
 confident !
 Pity him, madam, he is timid yet.
 Mark, Norbert ! do not shrink now !
 Here I yield
 My whole right in you to the Queen,
 observe !
 With her go put in practice the
 great schemes
 You teem with, follow the career else
 closed—
 Be all you cannot be except by her !
 Behold her.—Madam, say for pity's
 sake
 Anything—frankly say you love him.
 Else
 He'll not believe it : there's more
 earnest in
 His fear than you conceive—I know
 the man.

NORBERT

I know the woman somewhat, and
 confess
 I thought she had jested better—she
 begins
 To overcharge her part. I gravely
 wait
 Your pleasure, madam : where is my
 reward ?

QUEEN

Norbert, this wild girl (whom I
 recognise
 Scarce more than you do, in her
 fancy-fit,
 Eccentric speech and variable mirth,
 Not very wise perhaps and somewhat
 bold
 Yet suitable, the whole night's work
 being strange)
 —May still be right : I may do well
 to speak
 And make authentic what appears a
 dream
 To even myself. For, what she says,
 is true—

Yes, Norbert—what you spoke but
 now of love.
 Devotion, stirred no novel sense in
 me,
 But justified a warmth felt long before.
 Yes, from the first—I loved you, I
 shall say,—
 Strange ! but I do grow stronger, now
 'tis said,
 Your courage helps mine : you did
 well to speak
 To-night, the night that crowns your
 twelvemonths' toil—
 But still I have not waited to discern
 Your heart so long, believe me !
 From the first
 The source of so much zeal was
 almost plain,
 In absence even of your own words
 just now
 Which opened out the truth. 'Tis
 very strange,
 But takes a happy ending—in your
 love
 Which mine meets : be it so—as you
 choose me,
 So I choose you.

NORBERT

And worthily you choose !
 I will not be unworthy your esteem,
 No, madam. I do love you ; I will
 meet
 Your nature, now I know it ; this
 was well,
 I see,—you dare and you are justi-
 fied :
 But none had ventured such experi-
 ment,
 Less versed than you in nobleness of
 heart,
 Less confident of finding it in me.
 I like that thus you test me ere you
 grant
 The dearest, richest, beauteousest and
 best
 Of women to my arms ! 'tis like
 yourself !
 So—back again into my part's set
 words—
 Devotion to the uttermost is yours,

But no, you cannot, madam, even
you,
Create in me the love our Constance
does.
Or—something truer to the tragic
phrase—
Not yon magnolia-bell superb with
scent
Invites a certain insect—that's my-
self—
But the small eye-flower nearer to
the ground :
I take this lady !

CONSTANCE

Stay—not hers, the trap—
Stay, Norbert—that mistake were
worst of all.
(He is too cunning, madam !) it was I,
I, Norbert, who . . .

NORBERT

You, was it, Constance ? Then,
But for the grace of this divinest
hour
Which gives me you, I should not
pardon here.
I am the Queen's : she only knows
my brain—
She may experiment therefore on my
heart
And I instruct her too by the result ;
But you, sweet, you who know me,
who so long
Have told my heart-beats over, held
my life
In those white hands of yours,—it is
not well !

CONSTANCE

Tush ! I have said it, did I not say
it all ?
The life, for her—the heart-beats, for
her sake ?

NORBERT

Enough ! my cheek grows red, I
think. Your test !
There's not the meanest woman in
the world,

Not she I least could love in all the
world,
Whom, did she love me, did love
prove itself,
I dared insult as you insult me now.
Constance, I could say, if it must be
said,
“ Take back the soul you offer—I
keep mine ! ”
But—“ Take the soul still quiver-
ing on your hand,
The soul so offered, which I cannot
use,
And, please you, give it to some
friend of mine,
For—what's the trifle he requites me
with ? ”
I, tempt a woman, to amuse a man,
That two may mock her heart if it
succumb ?
No ! fearing God and standing 'neath
his heaven,
I would not dare insult a woman so,
Were she the meanest woman in the
world,
And he, I cared to please, ten em-
perors !

CONSTANCE

Norbert !

NORBERT

I love once as I live but once.
What case is this to think or talk about ?
I love you. Would it mend the case
at all
Should such a step as this kill love
in me ?
Your part were done : account to
God for it.
But mine—could murdered love get
up again,
And kneel to whom you pleased to
designate
And make you mirth ? It is too
horrible.
You did not know this, Constance ?
now you know
That body and soul have each one
life, but one :
And here's my love, here, living, at
your feet.

CONSTANCE

See the Queen! Norbert—this one
more last word—

If thus you have taken jest for earnest
—thus

Loved me in earnest . . .

NORBERT

Ah, no jest holds here!

Where is the laughter in which jests
break up?

And what this horror that grows
palpable?

Madam—why grasp you thus the
balcony?

Have I done ill? Have I not spoken
the truth?

How could I other? Was it not
your test,

To try me, and what my love for
Constance meant?

Madam, your royal soul itself ap-
proves,

The first, that I should choose thus!
so one takes

A beggar—asks him what would buy
his child,

And then approves the expected
laugh of scorn

Returned as something noble from
the rags.

Speak, Constance, I'm the beggar!
Ha, what's this?

You two glare each at each like
panthers now.

Constance—the world fades; only
you stand there!

You did not in to-night's wild whirl
of things

Sell me—your soul of souls, for any
price?

No—no—'tis easy to believe in you.
Was it your love's mad trial to

o'ertop
Mine by this vain self-sacrifice? well,

still—
Though I should curse, I love you.

I am love
And cannot change! love's self is at
your feet.

[QUEEN goes out.]

CONSTANCE

Feel my heart; let it die against
your own.

NORBERT

Against my own! explain not; let
this be.

This is life's height.

CONSTANCE

Yours! Yours! Yours!

NORBERT

You and I—

Why care by what meanders we are
here

In the centre of the labyrinth? men
have died

Trying to find this place out, which
we have found.

CONSTANCE

Found, found!

NORBERT

Sweet, never fear what
she can do.
We are past harm now.

CONSTANCE

On the breast of God.
I thought of men—as if you were a
man.

Tempting him with a crown!

NORBERT

This must end here
It is too perfect!

CONSTANCE

There's the music stopped.
What measured heavy tread? it is one
blaze
About me and within me.

NORBERT

Oh, some death
Will run its sudden finger round this
spark,
And sever us from the rest—

CONSTANCE

And so do well.
Now the doors open—

NORBERT

'Tis the guard comes.

CONSTANCE

Kiss!

SAUL

I

SAID Abner, "At last thou art come!

Ere I tell, ere thou speak,

Kiss my cheek, wish me well!"

Then I wished it, and did kiss
his cheek.

And he, "Since the King, O my

friend, for thy countenance sent,

Neither drunken nor eaten have we;
nor until from his tent

Thou return with the joyful assurance
the King liveth yet,

Shall our lip with the honey be bright,
with the water be wet.

For out of the black mid-tent's silence,
a space of three days,

Not a sound hath escaped to thy
servants, of prayer or of praise,

To betoken that Saul and the Spirit
have ended their strife,

And that, faint in his triumph, the
monarch sinks back upon life.

II

Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved!
God's child, with his dew

On thy gracious gold hair, and those
lilies still living and blue

Just broken to twine round thy harp-
strings, as if no wild heat

Were now raging to torture the
desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers,
and rose on my feet,

And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder.
The tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed,
and under I stooped;

Hands and knees on the slippery
grass-patch, all withered and
gone,

That extends to the second enclosure,
I groped my way on

Till I felt where the foldskirts fly
open. Then once more I prayed,

And opened the foldskirts and entered,
and was not afraid,

But spoke, "Here is David, thy
servant!" And no voice replied.

At the first I saw nought but the
blackness; but soon I descried

A something more black than the
blackness—the vast, the upright

Main prop which sustains the pavilion:
and slow into sight

Grew a figure against it, gigantic and
blackest of all;—

Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the
tent-roof,—showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop;
both arms stretched out wide

On the great cross-support in the
centre, that goes to each side:

He relaxed not a muscle, but hung
there,—as, caught in his pangs

And waiting his change the king-
serpent all heavily hangs,

Far away from his kind, in the pine,
till deliverance come

With the spring-time,—so agonised
Saul, drear and stark, blind and
dumb.

V

Then I turned my harp,—took off the
lilies we twine round its chords

Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the
noontide—those sunbeams like
swords!

And I first played the tune all our
sheep know, as, one after one,

So docile they come to the pen-door,
till folding be done.

They are white and untorn by the
bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the
water within the stream's bed ;
And now one after one seeks its
lodgings, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us.—
so blue and so far !

VI

—Then the tune, for which quails on
the cornland will each leave his
mate
To fly after the player ; then, what
makes the crickets elate,
Till for boldness they fight one an-
other: and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing out-
side his sand house—
There are none such as he for a
wonder, half bird and half
mouse !—
God made all the creatures and gave
them our love and our fear.
To give sign, we and they are his
children, one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our
reapers, their wine-song, when
hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good
friendship, and great hearts
expand
And grow one in the sense of this
world's life—And then, the last
song
When the dead man is praised on his
journey—" Bear, bear him along
With his few faults shut up like dead
flowerets ! are balm-seeds not here
To console us ? The land has none
left, such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my
brother !"—And then, the glad
chant
Of the marriage,—first go the young
maidens, next, she whom we
vaunt

As the beauty, the pride of our dwell-
ing.—And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist
him and buttress an arch
Nought can break ; who shall harm
them, our friends ?—Then, the
chorus intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar in
glory enthroned . . .
But I stopped here—for here in the
darkness, Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such
silence, and listened apart ;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul
shuddered,—and sparkles 'gan
dart
From the jewels that woke in his
turban at once with a start—
All its lordly male-sapphires, and
rubies courageous at heart.
So the head—but the body still moved
not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing,
pursued it unchecked,
As I sang,

IX

" Oh, our manhood's prime
vigour ! no spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing,
nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living ! the leap-
ing from rock up to rock—
The strong rending of boughs from
the fir-tree,—the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water,
the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion
is couched in his lair.
And the meal—the rich dates—yel-
lowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust's-flesh steeped in the
pitcher ; the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river
channel where bullrushes tell
That the water was wont to go
warbling so softly and well.

How good is man's life, the mere
living ! how fit to employ

All the heart and the soul and the
senses, for ever in joy !

Hast thou loved the white locks of
thy father, whose sword thou
didst guard

When he trusted thee forth with the
armies, for glorious reward ?

Didst thou see the thin hands of thy
mother, held up as men sung

The low song of the nearly-departed,
and heard her faint tongue

Joining in while it could to the wit-
ness, 'Let one more attest,

I have lived, seen God's hand thro'
a lifetime, and all was for
best? . . .

Then they sung thro' their tears in
strong triumph, not much,—but
the rest.

And thy brothers, the help and the con-
test, the working whence grew

Such result as from seething grape-
bundles, the spirit strained true !

And the friends of thy boyhood—that
boyhood of wonder and hope,

Present promise, and wealth of the
future beyond the eye's scope—

Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch ;
a people is thine ;

And all gifts which the world offers
singly, on one head combine !

On one head, all the beauty and
strength, love and rage, like the
throe

That, a-work in the rock, helps its
labour, and lets the gold go :

High ambition and deeds which sur-
pass it, fame crowning it,—all

Brought to blaze on the head of one
creature—King Saul !"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,
heart, hand, harp and voice,

Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow,
each bidding rejoice

Saul's fame in the light it was made
for—as when, dare I say,

The Lord's army in rapture of service,
strains through its array,

And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot
—"Saul !" cried I, and stopped,

And waited the thing that should
follow. Then Saul, who hung
propt

By the tent's cross-support in the
centre, was struck by his name.

Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy
summons goes right to the aim,

And some mountain, the last to with-
stand her, that held (he alone,

While the vale laughed in freedom and
flowers) on a broad bust of stone

A year's snow bound about for a
breastplate,—leaves grasp of the
sheet ?

Fold on fold all at once it crowds
thunderously down to his feet,

And there fronts you, stark, black but
alive yet, your mountain of old,

With his rents, the successive be-
queathings of ages untold—

Yea, each harm got in fighting your
battles, each furrow and scar

Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the
tempest—all hail, there they are !

Now again to be softened with ver-
dure, again hold the nest

Of the dove, tempt the goat and its
young to the green on its crest

For their food in the ardours of sum-
mer ! One long shudder thrilled

All the tent till the very air tingled,
then sank and was stilled,

At the King's self left standing before
me, released and aware.

What was gone, what remained ? all to
traverse 'twixt hope and despair—

Death was past, life not come—so he
waited. Awhile his right hand

Held the brow, helped the eyes left
too vacant forthwith to remand

To their place what new objects should
enter : 'twas Saul as before.

I looked up and dared gaze at those
eyes, nor was hurt any more

Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn,
ye watch from the shore

At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean
—a sun's slow decline—

Over hills which, reso' d in stern
silence, o'erlap an . entwine

Base with base to knit strength more
intense : so, arm folded in arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings
subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
(For, awhile there was trouble within
me) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had re-
stored him?—Song filled to the
verge
His cup with the wine of this life,
pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and
the beauty! Beyond, on what
fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and
perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and com-
mend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good;" still he
drinks not—he lets me praise
life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his
own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the
pastures, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle
wheeled slow as in sleep,
And I lay in my hollow, and mused
on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but
the strip 'twixt the hill and the
sky :
And I laughed—"Since my days are
ordained to be passed with my
flocks,
Let me people at least with my
fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix
with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those
fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and
right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what
men strive for." And now these
old trains

Of vague thought came again ; I grew
surer ; so once more the string
Of my harp made response to my
spirit, as thus—

XIII

"Yea, my king,"
I began—"thou dost well in reject-
ing mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in
common by man and by brute :
In our flesh grows the branch of this
life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the
tree,—how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's
antler ; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round ; and thou
mindedst when these too, in turn
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree
seemed perfect : yet more was to
learn,
Ev'n the good that comes in with the
palm-fruit. Our dates shall we
slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all
sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth
produced them? Not so! stem
and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their
place, while the palm-wine shall
staunch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter.
I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit
for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome
thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when in-
conscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine
running! each deed thou hast
done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the
world ; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though
clouds spoil him, though tem-
pests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed pro-
duced not, must everywhere
trace

The results of his past summer-prime,
 —so, each ray of thy will,
 Every flash of thy passion and
 prowess, long over, shall thrill
 Thy whole people, the countless, with
 ardour, till they too give forth
 A like cheer to their sons, who in
 turn fill the south and the north
 With the radiance thy deed was the
 germ of. Carouse in the past,
 But the licence of age has its limit ;
 thou diest at last.
 As the lion when age dims his eye-
 ball, the rose at her height,
 So with man—so his power and his
 beauty for ever take flight.
 N ! again a long draught of my soul-
 wine ! look forth o'er the years—
 Thou hast done now with eyes for the
 actual ; begin with the seer's !
 Is Saul dead ? in the depth of the
 vale make his tomb—bid arise
 A grey mountain of marble heaped
 four-square, till built to the skies.
 Let it mark where the great First King
 slumbers—whose fame would ye
 know ?
 Up above see the rock's naked face,
 where the record shall go
 In great characters cut by the scribe,
 —Such was Saul, so he did ;
 With the sages directing the work, by
 the populace chid,—
 For not half, they'll affirm, is com-
 prised there ! Which fault to
 amend,
 In the grove with his kind grows the
 cedar, whereon they shall spend
 (See, in tablets 'tis level before them)
 their praise, and record
 With the gold of the graver, Saul's
 story,—the statesman's great
 word
 Side by side with the poet's sweet
 comment. The river's a-wave
 With smooth paper-reeds grazing
 each other when prophet winds
 rave :
 So the pen gives unborn generations
 their due and their part
 In thy being ! Then, first of the
 mighty, thank God that thou art."

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . But
 O Thou who didst grant me that
 day,
 And before it not seldom hast granted,
 thy help to essay,
 Carry on and complete an adventure,
 —my Shield and my Sword
 In that act where my soul was thy
 servant, thy word was my word,—
 Still be with me, who then at the
 summit of human endeavour
 And scaling the highest man's thought
 could, gazed hopeless as ever
 On the new stretch of Heaven above
 me—till, Mighty to save,
 Just one lift of thy hand cleared that
 distance—God's throne from
 man's grave ?
 Let me tell out my tale to its ending
 —my voice to my heart,
 Which can scarce dare believe in what
 marvels that night I took part,
 As this morning I gather the frag-
 ments, alone with my sheep,
 And still fear lest the terrible glory
 vanish like sleep !
 For I wake in the grey dewy covert,
 while Hebron upheaves
 The dawn struggling with night on
 his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sun-
 shine.

XV

I say then,—my song
 While I sang thus, assuring the
 monarch, and ever more strong
 Made a proffer of good to console
 him—he slowly resumed
 His old motions and habitudes
 kingly. The right hand re-
 plumed
 His black locks to their wonted com-
 posure, adjusted the swathes
 Of his turban, and see—the huge
 sweat that his countenance bathes,
 He wipes off with the robe ; and he
 girds now his loins as of yore,
 And feels slow for the armlets of price,
 with the clasp set before.

He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—
 ere error had bent
 The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
 Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
 So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed by the pile
 Of his armour and war-cleak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
 And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
 His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on the praise
 If esaw from all men in all times, to the man patient there,
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
 Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
 If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: thro' my hair
 The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
 All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
 Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinised mine—
 And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
 I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
 I would add to that life of the past, both the future and this.
 I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
 As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke—
 "I have gone the whole round of Creation: I saw and I spoke!
 I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
 And pronounced on the rest of his handiwork—returned him again
 His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw.
 I report, as a man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law!
 Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
 To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
 Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at wisdom laid bare.
 Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite care!
 Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
 I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no less,
 In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
 And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
 (With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
 The submission of Man's nothing-perfect to God's All-Complete,
 As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet!
 Yet with all this abounding experience, this Deity known,
 I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
 There's one faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
 I am fain to keep still in abeyance I laugh as I think),
 Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
 E'en the Giver in one gift—Behold!
 I could love if I durst!

But I sink the pretension as fearing a
man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of
love: I abstain, for love's sake!
—What, my soul? see thus far and
no farther? when doors great and
small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch,
should the hundredth appal?
In the least things have faith, yet
distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature,
God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can com-
pete with it? here, the parts
shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,
the end, what Began?—
Would I fain in my impotent yearning
do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not
help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind,
the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang
of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled
with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth
for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as
my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to
go on, and give one more, the
best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore
him, maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's
dayspring, death's minute of
night?
Interpose at the difficult minute,
snatch Saul, the mistake.
Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems
now,—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the
prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new
life,—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended
—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's
dream, of the rest to make sure.

By the pain-throb, triumphantly win-
ning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and
repose, by the struggle in this.

XVII

"I believe it! 'tis Thou, God, that
givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is
my power to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it
moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open
these arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life
and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
/ will?—the mere atoms despise me!
and why am I loth
To look that, even that in the face
too? why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance?
what stops my despair?
This;—'tis not what man Does which
exalts him, but what man Would
do!
See the king—I would help him but
cannot, the wishes fall through,
Could I wrestle to raise him from
sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, to starve my own
out, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect.—
Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love?
So wilt Thou—so wilt Thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, in-
effablest, uttermost Crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly,
nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in!
It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that Salva-
tion joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty,
almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for
it, of Being beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most;
the strongest shall stand the most
weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I
cry for! my flesh, that I seek

In the Godhead! I seek and I find
 it. O Saul, it shall be
 A Face like my face that receives thee:
 a Man like to me,
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, for
 ever! a Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new
 life to thee! See the Christ
 stand!"

XVIII

I know not too well how I found my
 way home in the night.
 There were witnesses, cohorts about
 me, to left and to right,
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, un-
 seen, the alive—the aware—
 I repressed, I got through them as
 hardly, as strugglingly there,
 As a runner beset by the populace
 famished for news—
 Life or death. The whole earth was
 awakened, hell loosed with her
 crews;
 And the stars of night beat with
 emotion, and tingled and shot
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent
 knowledge: but I fainted not.
 For the Hand still impelled me at
 once and supported—suppressed
 All the tumult, and quenched it with
 quiet, and holy behest,
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and
 the earth sank to rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble
 had withered from earth—
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in
 the day's tender birth;
 In the gathered intensity brought to
 the grey of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests' new awe;
 in the sudden wind-thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore
 off, each with an eye sidling still
 Tho' averted, in wonder and dread:
 and the birds stiff and chill
 That rose heavily, as I approached
 them, made stupid with awe!
 E'en the serpent that slid away silent,
 —he felt the new Law.

The same stared in the white humid
 faces upturned by the flowers;
 The same worked in the heart of the
 cedar, and moved the vine-
 bowers.
 And the little brooks witnessing,
 murmured, persistent and low,
 With their obstinate, all but hushed
 voices—E'en so! it is so.

"DE GUSTIBUS—"

I

YOUR ghost will walk, you lover of
 trees,
 (If loves remain)
 In an English lane,
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with
 poppies.
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates
 please,
 Making love, say,—
 The happier they!
 Draw yourself up from the light of
 the moon
 And let them pass, as they will too
 soon,
 With the beanflowers' boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

II

What I love best in all the world,
 Is, a castle, precipice-encurled,
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apen-
 nine.
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
 (If I get my head from out the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's
 bands,
 And come again to the land of lands)—
 In a sea-side house to the farther south,
 Where the baked cicalas die of drouth,
 And one sharp tree ('tis a cypress)
 stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,
 Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er-
 crusted,
 My sentinel to guard the sands

To the water's edge. For, what
expands
Without the house, but the great
opaque
Blue breadth of sea, and not a break?
While, in the house, for ever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion
sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh
melons,
And says there's news to-day—the
king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling.
—She hopes they have not caught
the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her, Calais.)
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she;
So it always was, so it still shall be!

WOMEN AND ROSES

I

I DREAM of a red-rose tree,
And which of its roses three
Is the dearest rose to me?

II

Round and round, like a dance of
snow
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go
Floating the women faded for ages,
Sculptured in stone, on the poet's
pages.
Then follow the women fresh and
gay,
Living and loving and loved to-day.
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude
of maidens,
Beauties unborn. And all, to one
cadence,
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

III

Dear rose, thy term is reached,
Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached:
Bees pass it unimpeached.

IV

Stay then, stoop, since I cannot climb
You, great shapes of the antique time:
How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze
you,
Break my heart at your feet to please
you?
Oh! to possess, and be possessed!
Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid
breast!
But once of love, the poesy, the
passion,
Drink once and die!—In vain, the
same fashion,
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

V

Dear rose, thy joy's undimmed;
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

VI

Deep as drops from a statue's plinth
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,
So will I bury me while burning,
Quench like him at a plunge my
yearning,
Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips!
Fold me fast where the cincture slips,
Prison all my soul in eternities of
pleasure!
Girdle me once! But no—in their
old measure
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

VII

Dear rose without a thorn,
Thy bud's the babe unborn:
First streak of a new morn.

VIII

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the
clear!
What's far conquers what is near.
Rose will bloom nor want beholders,
Sprawl from the dust where our own
flesh moulders.

What shall arrive with the cycle's
change?

A novel grace and a beauty strange.
I will make an Eve, be the artist that
began her,

Shaped her to his mind!—Alas! in
like manner

They circle their rose on my rose tree.

PROTUS

Among these latter bastards we count
by scores,

Half-emperors and quarter-emperors.
Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-
thonged vest,

Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the
breast,—

One loves a baby face, with violets
there.

Violets instead of laurel in the hair,
As those were all the little locks could
bear.

Now read here. "Protus ends a
period

Of empery beginning with a god :
Born in the porphyry chamber at
Byzant ;

Queens by his cradle, proud and
ministrant.

And if he quickened breath there,
'twould like fire

Pantingly through the dim vast realm
transpire.

A fame that he was missing, spread
afar —

The world, from its four corners, rose
in war,

Till he was borne out on a balcony
To pacify the world when it should
see.

The captains ranged before him, one,
his hand

Made baby points at, gained the chief
command.

And day by day more beautiful he grew
In shape, all said, in feature and in
hue,

While young time's sculptors gazing
on the child

Were, as with old Greek sculpture,
reconnected.

Already sages laboured to condense
In easy tomes a life

And artists sought to give counsel to
imperi

In one hand and one hand sweep
all their art

To make his progress prompt as
blossoming

Of plentifully-watered palms in spring :
Since well he seems it, whose mounts
the throne,

For beauty, knowledge, strength,
should stand alone,

And mortals love the letters of his
name

—Stop! Have you turned two pages?
Still the same

New reign, same date. The scribe
goes on to

How that same year, on such a month
and day,

"John the Pannonian, groundedly
believed

A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard
hand reprieved

The Empire from its fate the year
before,

Came, had a mind to take the crown,
and wore

The same for six years, (during which
the Huns

Kept off their fingers from us) till his
sons

Put something in his liquor"—and
so forth.

Then a new reign. Stay--"Take at
its just worth"

(Subjoins an annotator) "what I give
As hearsay. Some think John let
Protus live

And slip away. 'Tis said, he reached
man's age

At some blind northern court : made
first a page,

Then, tutor to the children—last, of
use

About the hunting-stables. I deduce

He wrote the little tract 'On worm-
ing dogs,'
Whereof the name in sundry cata-
logues

Is extant yet. A Protus of the Race
Is rumoured to have died a monk in
Thrace,
And if the same, he reached senility."

Here's John the Smith's rough-
hammered head. Great eye,
Gross jaw and giped lips do what
granite can
To give you the crown-grasper.
What a man!

HOLY-CROSS DAY

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED
TO ATTEND AN ANNUAL CHRIS-
TIAN SERMON IN ROME

["Now was come about Holy-Cross
Day, and now must my lord preach
his first sermon to the Jews: as it
was of old cared for in the merciful
bowels of the Church, that, so to
speak, a crumb at least from her con-
spicuous table here in Rome, should
be, though but once yearly, cast to
the famishing dogs, under-trampled
and bespitten-upon beneath the feet
of the guests. And a moving sight
in truth, this, of so many of the be-
sotted, blind, restive and ready-
to-perish Hebrews! now paternally
brought—nay (for He saith, 'Compel
them to come in') haled, as it were,
by the head and hair, and against
their obstinate hearts, to partake of
the heavenly grace. What awaken-
ing, what striving with tears, what
working of a yeasty conscience! Nor
was my lord wanting to himself on so
apt an occasion; witness the abund-
ance of conversions which did in-
continently reward him: though not
to my lord be altogether the glory."

—*Diary by the Bishop's Secretary,*
1600.]

Though what the Jews really said,
on thus being driven to church, was
rather to this effect:

I

Free, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!
Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the
week.

Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,
Stinking and savoury, snug and
gruff.

Take the church-road, for the bell's
due chime

Gives us the summons—'tis sermon-
time.

II

Boh, here's Barnabas! Job, that's
you?

Up stumps Solomon—bustling too?
Shame, man! greedy beyond your
years

To handsel the bishop's shaving-
shears?

Fair play's a jewel! leave friends in
the lurch?

Stand on a line ere you start for the
church.

III

Higgledy-piggledy, packed we lie,
Rats in a hamper, swine in a sty,
Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,
Worms in a carcase, fleas in a sleeve,
Hist! square shoulders, settle your
thumbs

And buzz for the bishop—here he
comes.

IV

Bow, wow, wow—a bone for the
dog!

I liken his Grace to an acorned hog
What, a boy at his side, with the
bloom of a lass,

To help and handle my lord's hour-
glass!

Didst ever behold so lithe a chine?
His cheek hath laps like a fresh-
singed swine.

V

Aaron's asleep—shove hip to haunch,
Or somebody deal him a dig in the
paunch !
Look at the purse with the tassel and
knob,
And the gown with the angel and
thingumbob.
What's he at, quotha? reading his
text !
Now you've his curtesy—and what
comes next?

VI

See to our converts—you doomed
black dozen—
No stealing away—nor cog nor
cozen !
You five that were thieves, deserve
it fairly ;
You seven that were beggars, will
live less sparely ;
You took your turn and dipped in
the hat,
Got fortune --and fortune gets you ;
mind that !

VII

Give your first groan—compunction's
at work ;
And soft ! from a Jew you mount to
a Turk.
Lo, Micah,—the selfsame beard on
chin
He was four times already converted
in !
Here's a knife, clip quick—it's a
sign of grace—
Or he ruins us all with his hanging-
face.

VIII

Whom now is the bishop a-leering
at ?
I know a point where his text falls
pat.
I'll tell him to-morrow, a word just
now
Went to my heart and made me vow
I meddle no more with the worst of
trades—
Let somebody else pay his serenades.

IX

Groan altogether now, whee—hee—
hee !
It's a-work, it's a-work, ah, woe is
me !
It began, when a herd of us, picked
and placed,
Were spurred through the Corso,
stripped to the waist ;
Jew-brutes, with sweat and blood
well spent
To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

X

It grew, when the hangman entered
our bounds,
Yelled, pricked us out to this church
like hounds.
It got to a pitch, when the hand
indeed
Which gutted my purse, would
throttle my creed.
And it overflows, when, to even the
odd,
Men I helped to their sins, help me
to their God.

XI

But now, while the scapegoats leave
our flock,
And the rest sit silent and count the
clock,
Since forced to muse the appointed
time
On these precious facts and truths
sublime,—
Let us fitly employ it, under our
breath,
In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

XII

For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he
died,
Called sons and sons' sons to his side,
And spoke, " This world has been
harsh and strange,
Something is wrong, there needeth a
change.
But what, or where? at the last, or
first ?
In one point only we sinned, at worst,

XIII

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet,
And again in his border see Israel set.
When Judah beholds Jerusalem,
The stranger-seed shall be joined to them :
To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles cleave.
So the Prophet saith and his sons believe.

XIV

"Ay, the children of the chosen race
Shall carry and bring them to their place :
In the land of the Lord shall lead the same,
Bondsmen and handmaids. Who shall blame,
When the slaves enslave, the oppressed ones o'er
The oppressor triumph for evermore?

XV

"God spoke, and gave us the word to keep :
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,
Till the Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By his servant Moses the watch was set :
Though near upon cock-crow—we keep it yet.

XVI

"Thou ! if thou wast He, who at mid-watch came,
By the starlight naming a dubious Name !
And if we were too heavy with sleep—too rash
With fear—O Thou, if that martyr-gash
Fell on Thee coming to take thine own,
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

XVII

"Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.
But, the judgment over, join sides with us !
Thine too is the cause ! and not more thine
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,
Who maintain thee in word, and defy thee in deed !

XVIII

"We withstood Christ then? be mindful how
At least we withstand Barabbas now !
Was our outrage sore? but the worst we spared,
To have called these—Christians,—had we dared !
Let defiance to them pay mistrust of thee,
And Rome make amends for Calvary !

XIX

"By the torture, prolonged from age to age,
By the infamy, Israel's heritage,
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
By the branding-tool, the bloody whip,
And the summons to Christian fellowship,

XX

"We boast our proofs, that at least the Jew
Would wrest Christ's name from the Devil's crew.
Thy face took never so deep a shade
But we fought them in it, God our aid !
A trophy to bear, as we march, a band,
South, east, and on to the Pleasant Land !"

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE OF FANO

I

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou
only leave
That child, when thou hast done
with him, for me !
Let me sit all the day here, that
when eve
Shall find performed thy special
ministry
And time come for departure, thou,
suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child
for tending,
Another still, to quiet and re-
trieve.

II

Then I shall feel thee step one step,
no more,
From where thou standest now, to
where I gaze,
And suddenly my head be covered
o'er
With those wings, white above the
child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel
thee guarding
Me, out of all the world ; for me,
discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits
and opes its door !

III

I would not look up thither past thy
head
Because the door opes, like that
child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face
instead,
Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou
bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands
together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently
tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy
garments spread ?

IV

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy
healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside
thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much
thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and
smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had
soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and sup-
prest.

V

How soon all worldly wrong would
be repaired !
I think how I should view the
earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow
was bared
After thy healing, with such differ-
ent eyes.
O world, as God has made it ! love is
beauty :
And knowing this, is love, and love is
duty.
What further may be sought for or
declared ?

VI

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend) that little child
to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to
each
Pressed gently,—with his own head
turned away
Over the earth where so much lay
before him
Of work to do, though heaven was
opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the
beach.

VII

We were at Fano, and three times we
went
To sit and see him in his chapel
there.

And drink his beauty to our soul's
content
—My angel with me too : and since
I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which
in power
And glory comes this picture for a
dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnifi-
cent).

VIII

And since he did not work so ear-
nestly
At all times, and has else endured
some wrong,—
I took one thought his picture struck
from me,
And spread it out, translating it to
song.
My Love is here. Where are you,
dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's
far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

CLEON

"As certain also of your own poets
have said"—

CLEON the poet (from the sprinkled
isles,
Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,
And laugh their pride when the light
wave lisps "Greece"),—
To Protus in his Tyranny: much
health!

They give thy letter to me, even
now:
I read and seem as if I heard thee
speak.
The master of thy galley still unlades
Gift after gift; they block my court
at last
And pile themselves along its portico
Royal with sunset, like a thought of
thee:
And one white she-slave from the
group dispersed

Of black and white slaves, (like the
chequer-work
Pavement, at once my nation's work
and gift,
Now covered with this settle-down of
doves)
One lyric woman, in her crocus vest
Woven of sea-wools, with her two
white hands
Commends to me the strainer and
the cup
Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses
mine.

Well-counselled, king, in thy muni-
ficence!
For so shall men remark, in such an
act
Of love for him whose song gives life
its joy,
Thy recognition of the use of life;
Nor call thy spirit barely adequate
To help on life in straight ways,
broad enough
For vulgar souls, by ruling and the
rest.
Thou, in the daily building of thy
tower.
Whether in fierce and sudden spasms
of toil,
Or through dim lulls of unapparent
growth,
Or when the general work 'mid good
acclaim
Climbed with the eye to cheer the
architect,
Didst ne'er engage in work for mere
work's sake—
Hadst ever in thy heart the luring
hope
Of some eventual rest a-top of it,
Whence, all the tumult of the building
hushed,
Thou first of men mightst look out to
the east.
The vulgar saw thy tower; thou
sawest the sun.
For this, I promise on thy festival
To pour libation, looking o'er the
sea,
Making this slave narrate thy for-
tunes, speak

Thy great words, and describe thy
royal face—
Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives
the most
Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets
me here.
It is as thou hast heard : in one short
life
I, Cleon, have effected all those things
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.
That epos on thy hundred plates of
gold
Is mine,—and also mine the little
chaunt,
So sure to rise from every fishing-bark
When, lights at prow, the seamen
haul their nets.
The image of the sun-god on the
phare,
Men turn from the sun's self to see,
is mine ;
The Pæcile, o'er-storied its whole
length,
As thou didst hear, with painting, is
mine too.
I know the true proportions of a man
And woman also, not observed be-
fore ;
And I have written three books on
the soul,
Proving absurd all written hitherto,
And putting us to ignorance again.
For music,—why, I have combined
the moods.
Inventing one. In brief, all arts are
mine ;
Thus much the people know and
recognise.
Throughout our seventeen islands.
Marvel not.
We of these latter days, with greater
mind
Than our forerunners, since more
composite,
Look not so great (beside their simple
way)
To a judge who only sees one way at
once,
One mind-point, and no other at a
time.—

Compares the small part of a man
of us
With some whole man of the heroic
age,
Great in his way,—not ours, nor
meant for ours,
And ours is greater, had we skill to
know.
Yet, what we call this of men on
earth,
This sequence of the soul's achieve-
ments here,
Being, as I find much reason to
conceive,
Intended to be viewed eventually
As a great whole, not analysed to
parts,
But each part having reference to all,—
How shall a certain part, pronounced
complete,
Endure effacement by another part ?
Was the thing done ?—Then what's
to do again ?
See, in the chequered pavement
opposite,
Suppose the artist made a perfect
rhomb,
And next a lozenge, then a trapezoid—
He did not overlay them, superimpose
The new upon the old and blot it out.
But laid them on a level in his work,
Making at last a picture ; there it
lies.
So, first the perfect separate form
were made,
The portions of mankind—and after,
so,
Occurred the combination of the same.
Or where had been a progress, other-
wise ?
Mankind, made up of all the single
men.
In such a synthesis the labour ends.
Now, mark me—those divine men of
old time
Have reached, thou sayest well, each
at one point
The outside verge that rounds our
faculty ;
And where they reached, who can do
more than reach ?
It takes but little water just to touch

At some one point the inside of a sphere,

And, as we turn the sphere, touch all the rest

In due succession : but the finer air Which not so palpably nor obviously, Though no less universally, can touch The whole circumference of that emptied sphere,

Fills it more fully than the water did ; Holds thrice the weight of water in itself

Resolved into a subtler element.

And yet the vulgar call the sphere first full

Up to the visible height—and after, void ;

Not knowing air's more hidden properties.

And thus our soul, misknown, cries out to Zeus

To vindicate his purpose in its life—

Why stay we on the earth unless to grow ?

Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,

That he or other God, descended here

And, once for all, showed simultaneously

What, in its nature, never can be shown

Piecemeal or in succession ;—showed, I say,

The worth both absolute and relative Of all His children from the birth of time,

His instruments for all appointed work.

I now go on to image,—might we hear

The judgment which should give the due to each,

Show where the labour lay and where the ease,

And prove Zeus' self, the latent, everywhere !

This is a dream. But no dream, let us hope,

That years and days, the summers and the springs

Follow each other with unwaning powers—

The grapes which dye thy wine, are richer far

Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock ;

The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe ;

The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet ;

The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers ;

That young and tender crescent-moon thy slave,

Sleeping upon her robe as if on clouds, Refines upon the women of my youth.

What, and the soul alone deteriorates ?

I have not chanted verse like Homer's, no —

Nor swept string like Terpander, no nor carved

And painted men like Phildias and his friend :

I am not great as they are, point by point :

But I have entered into sympathy

With these four, running these into one soul.

Who, separate, ignored each others' arts.

Say, is it nothing that I know them all ?

The wild flower was the larger—I have dashed

Rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's

Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,

And show a better flower if not so large.

I stand, myself. Refer this to the gods

Whose gift alone it is ! which, shall I dare

(All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext

That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,

Discourse of lightly or depreciate ?

It might have fallen to another's hand—what then ?

I pass too surely—let at least truth stay !

And next, of what thou followest
 on to ask.
 This being with me as I declare, O
 king,
 My works, in all these varicoloured
 kinds,
 So done by me, accepted so by men --
 Thou askest if (my soul thus in men's
 hearts)
 I must not be accounted to attain
 The very crown and proper end of
 life.
 Inquiring thence how, now life closeth
 up,
 I face death with success in my right
 hand :
 Whether I fear death less than dost
 thyself
 The fortunate of men. "For" (writest
 thou)
 "Thou leavest much behind, while I
 leave nought :
 Thy life stays in the poems men shall
 sing,
 The pictures men shall study ; while
 my life,
 Complete and whole now in its power
 and joy,
 Dies altogether with my brain and
 arm
 Is lost indeed ; since,—what survives
 myself?
 The brazen statue that o'erlooks my
 grave,
 Set on the promontory which I named.
 And that—some supple courtier of
 my heir
 Shall use its robed and sceptred arm,
 perhaps,
 To fix the rope to, which best drags
 it down.
 I go, then : triumph thou, who dost
 not go !"

 Nay, thou art worthy of hearing
 my whole mind.
 Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to
 muse
 Upon the scheme of earth and man
 in chief,
 That admiration grows as knowledge
 grows ?

That imperfection means perfection
 hid,
 Reserved in part, to grace the after-
 time ?
 If, in the morning of philosophy,
 Ere aught had been recorded, aught
 perceived,
 Thou, with the light now in thee,
 couldst have looked
 On all earth's tenantry, from worm
 to bird,
 Ere man had yet appeared upon the
 stage—
 Thou wouldst have seen them perfect,
 and deduced
 The perfectness of others yet unseen.
 Conceding which, — had Zeus then
 questioned thee
 "Wilt thou go on a step, improve on
 this,
 Do more for visible creatures than is
 done ?"
 Thou wouldst have answered, "Ay,
 by making each
 Grow conscious in himself—by that
 alone.
 All's perfect else : the shell sucks fast
 the rock,
 The fish strikes through the sea, the
 snake both swims
 And slides ; the birds take flight,
 forth range the beasts,
 Till life's mechanics can no further
 go—
 And all this joy in natural life is
 put
 Like fire from off Thy finger into each,
 So exquisitely perfect is the same.
 But 'tis pure fire—and they mere
 matter are ;
 It has them, not they it : and so I
 choose,
 For man, Thy last premeditated
 work
 (If I might add a glory to this scheme)
 That a third thing should stand apart
 from both,
 A quality arise within the soul,
 Which, intro-active, made to super-
 vise
 And feel the force it has, may view
 itself.

And so be happy." Man might live
at first

The animal life : but is there nothing
more ?

In due time, let him critically learn
How he lives ; and, the more he gets
to know

Of his own life's adaptabilities,
The more joy-giving will his life be-
come.

The man who hath this quality, is
best.

But thou, king, hadst more reason-
ably said :

"Let progress end at once,—man
make no step

Beyond the natural man, the better
beast,

Using his senses, not the sense of
sense."

In man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and unconscious forms of
life.

We called it an advance, the render-
ing plain

A spirit might grow conscious of that
life,

And, by new lore so added to the
old,

Take each step higher over the brute's
head.

This grew the only life, the pleasure-
house,

Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of
the soul,

Which whole surrounding flats of
natural life

Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to ;

A tower that crowns a country. But,
alas !

The soul now climbs it just to perish
there,

For thence we have discovered ('tis
no dream—

We know this, which we had not else
perceived)

That there's a world of capability

For joy, spread round about us, meant
for us,

Inviting us ; and still the soul craves
all,

And still the flesh replies, "Take no
jot more

Than ere you climbed the tower to
look abroad !

Nay, so much less, as that fatigue has
brought

Deduction to it." We struggle—fain
to enlarge

Our bounded physical recipiency,
Increase our power, supply fresh oil
to life,

Repair the waste of age and sickness.
No,

It skills not : life's inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to
take.

They praise a fountain in my garden
here

Wherein a Naiad sends the water-
spurt

Thin from her tube ; she smiles to see
it rise.

What if I told her, it is just a thread
From that great river which the hills
shut up.

And mock her with my leave to take
the same ?

The artificer has given her one small
tube

Past power to widen or exchange
what boots

To know she might spout oceans if
she could ?

She cannot lift beyond her first straight
thread.

And so a man can use but a man's
joy

While he sees God's. Is it for Zeus
to boast.

"See, man, how happy I live, and
despair—

That I may be still happier—for thy
use !"

If this were so, we could not thank
our Lord,

As hearts beat on to doing : 'tis not
so—

Malice it is not. Is it carelessness ?

Still, no. If care—where is the sign,
I ask—

And get no answer : and agree in
sum,

O king, with thy profound discouragement,

Who seest the wider but to sigh the more.

Most progress is most failure! thou sayest well.

The last point now:—thou dost except a case—

Holding joy not impossible to one

With artist-gifts—to such a man as I—

Who leave behind me living works indeed;

For, such a poem, such a painting lives.

What? dost thou verily trip upon a word,

Confound the accurate view of what joy is

(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)

With feeling joy? confound the knowing how

And showing how to live (my faculty)

With actually living?—Otherwise

Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?

Because in my great epos I display

How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act—

Is this as though I acted? if I paint,

Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young?

Methinks I'm older that I bowed myself

The many years of pain that taught me art!

Indeed, to know is something, and to prove

How all this beauty might be enjoyed, is more:

But, knowing nought, to enjoy is something too.

Yon rower with the moulded muscles there

Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.

I can write love-odes—thy fair slave's an ode.

I get to sing of love, when grown too grey

For being beloved: she turns to that young man.

The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
I know the joy of kingship: well—
thou art king!

"But," sayest thou—(and I marvel,
I repeat,

To find thee tripping on a mere word)

"what

Thou writest, paintest, stays: that does not die:

Sappho survives, because we sing her songs,

And Æschylus, because we read his plays!"

Why, if they live still, let them come and take

Thy slave in my despit—drink from thy cup

Speak in my place. Thou diest while I survive?

Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,—

In this, that every day my sense of joy Grows more acute, my soul (intensified

In power and insight) more enlarged, more keen:

While every day my hairs fall more and more,

My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—

The horror quickening still from year to year,

The consummation coming past escape

When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy

When all my works wherein I prove my worth,

Being present still to mock me in men's mouths.

Alive still, in the phrase of such as thou,

I, I, the feeling, thinking, acting man.

The man who loved his life so over much,

Shall sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,

I dare at times imagine to my need Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,

Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,

To seek which, the joy-hunger forces
us.

That, stung by straitness of our life,
made strait

On purpose to make sweet the life at
large—

Freed by the throbbing impulse we
call death,

We burst there as the worm into the
fly,

Who, while a worm still, wants his
wings. But no!

Zeus has not yet revealed it; and
alas!

He must have done so—were it
possible!

Live long and happy, and in that
thought die,

Glad for what was. Farewell. And
for the rest,

I cannot tell thy messenger aright
Where to deliver what he bears of
thine

To one called Paulus—we have heard
his fame

Indeed, if Christus be not one with
him—

I know not, nor am troubled much
to know.

Thou canst not think a mere bar-
barian Jew.

As Paulus proves to be, one circum-
cised,

Hath access to a secret shut from
us?

Thou wrongest our philosophy, O
king,

In stooping to inquire of such an
one.

As if his answer could impose at
all.

He writeth, doth he? well, and he
may write.

Oh, the Jew findeth scholars! certain
slaves

Who touched on this same isle,
preached him and Christ;

And (as I gathered from a by-
stander)

Their doctrines could be held by no
sane man.

POPULARITY

I

STAND still, true poet that you are,
I know you; let me try and draw
you.

Some night you'll fail us. When afar
You rise, remember one man saw

you,
Knew you, and named a star.

II

My star, God's glow-worm! Why
extend

That loving hand of His which
leads you,

Yet locks you safe from end to end
Of this dark world, unless He needs

you—
Just saves your light to spend?

III

His clenched Hand shall uncloset at
last

I know, and let out all the beauty.
My poet holds the future fast,

Accepts the coming ages' duty,
Their present for this past.

IV

That day, the earth's feast-master's
brow

Shall clear, to God the chalice
raising;

"Others give best at first, but Thou
For ever set'st our table praising,—
Keep'st the good wine till now."

V

Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,
With few or none to watch and
wonder.

I'll say—a fisher (on the sand
By Tyre the Old) his ocean-plunder,
A netful, brought to land.

VI

Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes
Whereof one drop worked miracles,
And coloured like Astarie's eyes
Raw silk the merchant sells?

VII

And each bystander of them all
Could criticise, and quote tradition
How depths of blue sublimed some
pall,
To get which, pricked a king's
ambition;
Worth sceptre, crown and ball.

VIII

Yet there's the dye,—in that rough
mesh,
The sea has only just o'er-whis-
pered!
Live whelks, the lip's-beard dripping
fresh,
As if they still the water's lisp
heard
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

IX

Enough to furnish Solomon
Such hangings for his cedar-house,
That when gold-robed he took the
throne
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
Might swear his presence shone

X

Most like the centre-spike of gold
Which burns deep in the blue-bell's
womb,
What time, with ardours manifold,
The bee goes singing to her groom,
Drunken and overbold.

XI

Mere conchs! not fit for warp or
woof!
Till art comes,—comes to pound
and squeeze
And clarify,—refines to proof
The liquor filtered by degrees,
While the world stands aloof.

XII

And there's the extract, flaked and
fine.
And priced, and saleable at last!
And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and
Nokes combine
To paint the future from the past,
Put blue into their line.

XIII

Hobbs hints blue—straight he turtle
eats.
Nobbs prints blue,—claret crowns
his cup.
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure
feats, --
Both gorge. Who fished the murex
up?
What porridge had John Keats?

THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY

A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE

(*In the original*) ROSA MUNDI; SEU,
FULCITE ME FLORIBUS. A CON-
CEIT OF MASTER GYSBRECHT,
CANON-REGULAR OF SAINT JO-
DOCUS-BY-THE-BAR, YPRES CITY.
CANTUQUE, *Virgilius*. AND
HATH OFTEN BEEN SUNG AT
HOCK-TIDE AND FESTIVALS.
GAVISUS ERAM, *Jessides*.

(It would seem to be a glimpse from
the burning of Jacques du Bourg-
Molay, at Paris, A.D. 1314; as dis-
torted by the refraction from Flemish
brain to brain, during the course of a
couple of centuries.—R. B.)

I

PREADMONISHETH THE ABBOT
DEODAET

THE Lord, we look to once for all.
Is the Lord we should look at, all
at once:
He knows not to vary, saith St. Paul,
Nor the shadow of turning, or the
nonce.

See Him no other than as he is ;

Give both the Infinites their due
Infinite mercy, but, I wis,
As infinite a justice too.

[*Organ : plagal cadence.*
As infinite a justice too.

II

ONE SINGETH

John, Master of the Temple of God,
Falling to sin th' Unknown Sin,
What he bought of Emperor Alda-
brod,

He sold it to Sultan Saladin—
Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-
buzzing there,
Hornet-prince of the mad wasps' hives,

And clipt of his wings in Paris square,
They bring him now to be burned
alive.

[*And wanteth there grace of lute
or clavicithern, ye shall say
to confirm him who singeth—*

We bring John now to be burned
alive.

III

In the midst is a goodly gallows
built ;

'Twixt fork and fork, a stake is
stuck ;

But first they set divers umbrils
a-tilt,

Make a trench all round with the
city muck ;

Inside they pile log upon log, good
store ;

Faggots not few, blocks great and
small,

Reach a man's mid-thigh, no less, no
more.—

For they mean he should roast in
the sight of all.

CHORUS

We mean he should roast in the
sight of all.

IV

Good sappy havins that kindle forth-
with ;

Billets that blaze substantial and
slow ;

Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith ;
Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-
white glow ;

Then up they hoist me John in a chafe,
Sling him fast like a hog to scorch.
Spit in his face, then leap back safe,
Sing "Laudes" and bid clap-to
the torch.

CHORUS

Laus Deo—who bids clap-to the
torch.

V

John of the Temple, whose fame so
bragged,

Is burning alive in Paris square !

How can he curse, if his mouth is
gagged ?

Or wriggle his neck, with a collar
there ?

Or heave his chest, while a band goes
round ?

Or threat with his fist, since his
arms are spliced ?

Or kick with his feet, now his legs
are bound ?

—Thinks John—I will call upon
Jesus Christ.

[*Here one crosseth himself.*

VI

Jesus Christ—John had bought and
sold,

Jesus Christ—John had eaten and
drunk ;

To him, the Flesh meant silver and gold.
[*Salvo reverentia.*]

Now it was, "Saviour, bountiful lamb,
I have roasted thee Turks, though
men roast me.

See thy servant, the plight wherein I
am !

Art thou a Saviour? Save thou me!"

CHORUS

'Tis John the mocker cries, Save
thou me !

VII

Who maketh God's menace an idle word?

Saith, it no more means what it proclaims.

Than a damsel's threat to her wanton bird?

For she too prattles of ugly names.

Saith, he knoweth but one thing,—
what he knows;

That God is good and the rest is
breath;

Why else is the same styled, Sharon's
rose?

Once a rose, ever a rose, he saith.

CHORUS

O, John shall yet find a rose, he
saith!

VIII

Alack, there be roses and roses,
John!

Some, honied of taste like your
leman's tongue:

Some, bitter—for why? (roast gaily
on!)

Their tree struck root in devil's
dung!

When Paul once reasoned of right-
eousness

And of temperance and of judg-
ment to come,

Good Felix trembled, he could no
less—

John, snickering, crook'd his wicked
thumb?

CHORUS

What cometh to John of the wicked
thumb?

IX

Ha ha, John plucks now at his rose
To rid himself of a sorrow at
heart!

Lo,—petal on petal, fierce rays un-
close;

Anther on anther, sharp spikes
outstart;

And with blood for dew, the bosom
boils;

And a gust of sulphur is all its
smell

And lo, he is horribly in the toils
Of a coal-black giant flower of
Hell!

CHORUS

What maketh Heaven, that maketh
Hell.

X

So, as John called now, through the
fire amain,

On the Name, he had cursed with,
all his life

To the Person, he bought and sold
again—

For the Face, with his daily buffets
rife—

Feature by feature It took its place!

And his voice like a mad dog's
choking bark

At the steady Whole of the Judge's
Face

Died. Forth John's soul flared
into the dark.

SUBJOINETH THE ABBOT DEODAET

God help all poor souls lost in the
dark.

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I

I WONDER do you feel to-day
As I have felt, since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

II

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalised me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders
throw
Mocking across our path) for
rhymes
To catch at and let go.

III

Help me to hold it : first it left
 The yellowing fennel, run to seed
 There, branching from the brick-
 work's cleft,
 Some old tomb's ruin : yonder
 weed
 Took up the floating weft,

IV

Where one small orange cup amassed
 Five beetles,—blind and green they
 grope
 Among the honey-meal,—and last
 Everywhere on the grassy slope
 I traced it. Hold it fast !

V

The champaign with its endless fleece
 Of feathery grasses everywhere !
 Silence and passion, joy and peace,
 An everlasting wash of air—
 Rome's ghost since her decease

VI

Such life there, through such lengths
 of hours,
 Such miracles performed in play,
 Such primal naked forms of flowers,
 Such letting Nature have her way
 While Heaven looks from its towers.

VII

How say you ? Let us, O my dove,
 Let us be unashamed of soul,
 As earth lies bare to heaven above.
 How is it under our control
 To love or not to love ?

VIII

I would that you were all to me,
 You that are just so much, no
 more—
 Not yond, nor mine, nor slave nor
 free !
 Where does the fault lie ? what the
 core
 Of the wound, since wound must be ?

IX

I would I could adopt your will,
 See with your eyes, and set my heart
 Beating by yours, and drink my fill
 At your soul's springs,—your part,
 my part
 In life, for good and ill.

X

No. I yearn upward—touch you
 close,
 Then stand away. I kiss your
 cheek,
 Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck
 the rose
 And love it more than tongue can
 speak—
 Then the good minute goes.

XI

Already how am I so far
 Out of that minute ? Must I go
 Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
 Onward, whenever light winds
 blow,
 Fixed by no friendly star ?

XII

Just when I seemed about to learn !
 Where is the thread now ? Off again !
 The old trick ! Only I discern—
 Infinite passion and the pain
 Of finite hearts that yearn.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

Time—Shortly after the revival of
 learning in Europe.]

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
 Singing together.
 Leave we the common crofts, the
 vulgar thorpes,
 Each in its tether
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the
 plain,
 Cared-for till cock-crow.
 Look out if yonder's not the day again
 Rimming the rock-row !

That's the appropriate country —
 there, man's thought,
 Rarer, intenser,
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it
 ought,
 Chafes in the censer !
 Leave we the unlettered plain its
 herd and crop ;
 Seek we sepulture
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
 Crowded with culture !
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest
 excels ;
 Clouds overcome it ;
 No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's
 Circling its summit !
 Thither our path lies—wind we up
 the heights—
 Wait ye the warning ?
 Our low life was the level's and the
 night's ;
 He's for the morning !
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect
 the head,
 'Ware the beholders !
 This is our master, famous, calm, and
 dead,
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, dark-
 ling thorpe and croft,
 Safe from the weather !
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together,
 He was a man born with thy face
 and throat,
 Lyric Apollo !
 Long he lived nameless : how should
 spring take note
 Winter would follow ?
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth
 was gone !
 Cramped and diminished.
 Moaned he, "New measures, other
 feet anon !
 My dance is finished !"
 No, that's the world's way ! (keep
 the mountain-side,
 Make for the city.)
 He knew the signal, and stepped on
 with pride
 Over men's pity ;

Left play for work, and grappled with
 the world
 Bent on escaping :
 "What's in the scroll," quoth he,
 "thou keepest furled ?
 Show me their shaping,
 Theirs, wh—most studied man, the
 bard and sage,—
 Give !"—So he gowned him,
 Straight got by heart that book to its
 last page :
 Learned, we found him !
 Yea, but we found him bald too—
 eyes like lead,
 Accents uncertain :
 "Time to taste life," another would
 have said,
 "Up with the curtain !"
 This man said rather, "Actual life
 comes next ?
 Patience a moment !
 Grant I have mastered learning's
 crabbed text,
 Still, there's the comment.
 Let me know all. Prate not of most
 or least,
 Painful or easy :
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up
 the feast,
 Ay, nor feel queasy !"
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
 When he had learned it,
 When he had gathered all books had
 to give ;
 Sooner, he spurned it !
 Image the whole, then execute the
 parts—
 Fancy the fabric
 Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike
 fire from quartz,
 Ere mortar dab brick !
 (Here's the town-gate reached : there's
 the market-place
 Gaping before us.)
 Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
 (Hearten our chorus)
 Still before living he'd learn how to
 live—
 No end to learning.
 Earn the means first—God surely will
 contrive
 Use for our earning.

Other's mistrust and say—"But time
escapes,—
live now or never!"
He said, "What's Time? leave Now
for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then: deeper
drooped his head;
Calculus racked him:
Leadens before, his eyes grew dross
of lead;
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, Master, take a little rest!"
not he!
(Caution redoubled!)
Step two a-breast, the way winds
narrowly.)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred
thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure,
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw
on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly
period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools
do here,
Paid by instalment!
He ventured neck or nothing—
heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He
answered "Yes."
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to
pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to
one,
His hundred's soon hit:

This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he
need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and
unperplex
Seeking shall find Him.
So, with the throttling hands of
Death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech
were rife.
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!
Properly based *Oun*—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the
proper place.
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak! the multitude
below
Live, for they can, there.
This man decided not to Live but
Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors
shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! let joy break
with the storm—
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world
suspects
Living and dying.

ONE WAY OF LOVE

I

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves,
And strew them where Pauline may
pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

II

How many a month I strove to suit
These stul'born fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string—fold music's wing.
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

III

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion—heaven or
hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they.

III

And after, for pastime,
If June be refulgent
With flowers in completeness.
All petals, no prickles,
Delicious as trickles
Of wine poured at mass-time,
And choose One indulgent
To redness and sweetness:
Or if, with experience of man and of
spider,
She use my June-lightning, the strong
insect-ridder,
To stop the fresh spinning.—why,
June will consider.

ANOTHER WAY OF LOVE

I

JUNE was not over,
Though past the full,
And the best of her roses
Had yet to blow,
When a man I know
(But shall not discover,
Since ears are dull,
And time discloses)
Turned him and said with a man's
true air,
Half sighing a smile in a yawn, as
'twere,—
“If I tire of your June, will she
greatly care?”

II

Well. Dear, in-doors with you!
True, serene deadness
Tries a man's temper.
What's in the blossom
June wears on her bosom?
Can it clear scores with you?
Sweetness and redness.
Eadem semper!
Go, let me care for it greatly or
slightly!
If June mends her bowers now, your
hand left unsightly
By plucking their roses,—my June
will do rightly.

“TRANSCENDENTALISM”

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS

STOP playing, poet! may a brother
speak?
'Tis you speak, that's your error.
Song's our art:
Whereas you please to speak these
naked thoughts
Instead of draping them in sights and
sounds.
—True thoughts, good thoughts,
thoughts fit to treasure up!
But why such long prolusion and
display,
Such turning and adjustment of the
harp,
And taking it upon your breast at
length,
Only to speak dry words across its
strings?
Stark-naked thought is in request
enough—
Speak prose and holla it till Europe
hears!
The six-foot Swiss tube, braced about
with bark,
Which helps the hunter's voice from
Alp to Alp—
Exchange our harp for that.—who
hinders you?

But here's your fault; grown men
 want thought, you think
 Thought's what they mean by verse,
 and seek in verse:
 Boys seek for images and melody,
 Men must have reason—so you aim
 at men.
 Quite otherwise! Objects throng our
 youth, 'tis true
 We see and hear and do not wonder
 much.
 If you could tell us what they mean,
 indeed!
 As Swedish Boehme never cared for
 plants
 Until it happened, a-walking in the
 fields,
 He noticed all at once that plants
 could speak,
 Nay, turned with loosened tongue to
 talk with him.
 That day the daisy had an eye indeed—
 Colloquised with the cowslip on such
 themes!
 We find them extant yet in Jacob's
 prose.
 But by the time youth slips a stage
 or two
 While reading prose in that tough
 book he wrote,
 Collating, and emendating the same
 And settling on the sense most to
 our mind)
 We shut the clasps and find life's
 summer past.
 Then, who helps more, pray, to repair
 our loss
 Another Boehme with a tougher book
 And subtler meanings of what roses
 say,—
 Or some stout Mage like him of
 Halberstadt,
 John, who made things Boehme wrote
 thoughts about?
 He with a "look you!" vents a brace
 of rhymes,
 And in there breaks the sudden rose
 herself,
 Over us, under, round us every side,
 Nay, in and out the tables and the chairs
 And musty volumes, Boehme's book
 and all,—

Buries us with a glory, young once
 more,
 Pouring heaven into this shut house
 of life.

So come, the harp back to your
 heart again!
 You are a poem, though your poem's
 naught
 The best of all you did before, believe,
 Was your own boy's-face o'er the
 finer chords
 Bent, following the cherub at the top
 That points to God with his paired
 half-moon wings.

MISCONCEPTIONS

I
 THIS is a spray the Bird clung to,
 Making it blossom with pleasure,
 Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
 Fit for her nest and her treasure.
 Oh, what a hope beyond measure
 Was the poor spray's, which the flying
 feet hung to,—
 So to be singled out, built in, and
 sung to!

II
 This is a heart the Queen leant on,
 Thrilled in a minute erratic,
 Ere the true bosom she bent on,
 Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
 Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
 Was the poor heart's, ere the wan-
 derer went on—
 Love to be saved for it, proffered to,
 spent on!

ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

I
 THERE they are, my fifty men and
 women
 Naming me the fifty poems finished!
 Take them, Love, the book and me
 together.
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie
 also.

II

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain
volume

Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil,
Else he only used to draw Madonnas :
These, the world might view—but
One, the volume.

Who that one, you ask ? Your heart
instructs you.

Did she live and love it all her life-
time ?

Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's
glory,

Rafael's cheek so duteous and so
loving—

Cheek, the world was wont to hail a
painter's,

Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a
poet's ?

III

You and I would rather read that
volume,

(Taken to his beating bosom by it
Lean and list the bosom-beats of
Rafael,

Would we not ? than wonder at
Madonnas

Her, San Sisto names, and Her,
Foligno,

Her, that visits Florence in a vision.

Her, that's left with lilies in the
Louvre

Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV

You and I will never read that
volume.

Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and
loved it.

Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world with it, " Ours
—the treasure ! "

Suddenly, as rare things will, it
vanished.

V

Dante once prepared to paint an
angel :

Whom to please ? You whisper
" Beatrice, "

While he mused and traced it and
retraced it,

(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he
dipped for,

When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the
wicked,

Back he held the brow and pricked
its stigma,

Bit into the live man's flesh for parch-
ment.

Loosed him, laughed to see the
writing rankle.

Let the wretch go festering thro'
Florence)

Dante, who loved well because he
hated,

Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel, —

In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—" Certain people of import-
ance "

(Such he gave his daily, dreadful line
to)

Entered and would seize, forsooth,
the poet.

Says the poet—" Then I stopped my
painting. "

VI

You and I would rather see that
angel,

Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not ?—than read a fresh
Inferno.

VII

You and I will never see that picture
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined
angel,

In they broke, those " people of im-
portance : "

We and Bice bear the loss for ever.

ONE WORD MORE

721

VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?

IX

This : no artist lives and loves that
longs not
Once, and only once, and for One
only,
(Ah, the prize !) to find his love a
language
Fit and fair and simple and suffi-
cient—
Using nature that's an art to others.
Not, this one time, art that's turned
his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, lov-
ing,
None but would forego his proper
dowry,—
Does he paint? he fain would write
a poem, --
Does he write? he fain would paint
a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for One
only,
So to be the man and leave the
artist,
Save the man's joy, miss the artist's
sorrow.

X

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes
earth's abatement !
He who smites the rock and spreads
the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd be-
neath him,
Even he, the minute makes im-
mortal,
Proves, perchance, his mortal in the
minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in do-
ing,
While he smites, how can he but
remember,
So he smote before, in such a
peril,

When they stood and mocked—"Shall
smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A
stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and
went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—"But
drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual
triumph;
Thus the doing savours of disre-
lish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious
somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the
mandate.
Carelessness or consciousness, the
gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about
him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed
faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'cus-
tomed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men,
smite, and save us?"
Guesses what is like to prove the
sequel.
"Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought
was better."

XI

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic
warrant !
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven
brilliance.
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's im-
perial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the
prophet.

XII

Did he love one face from out the
thousands,
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white
and wifely,
Were she but the Ethiopian bond-
slave.)
He would envy yon dumb patient
camel,

Keeping a reserve of scanty water
 Meant to save his own life in the
 desert ;
 Ready in the desert to deliver
 (Kneeling down to let his breast be
 opened)
 Hoard and life together for his mis-
 tress.

XIII

I shall never, in the years remain-
 ing,
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you
 statues,
 Make you music that should all-
 express me ;
 So it seems : I stand on my attain-
 ment.
 This of verse alone, one life allows
 me ;
 Verse and nothing else have I to give
 you.
 Other heights in other lives, God
 willing : -
 All the gifts from all the heights,
 your own, Love !

XIV

Yet a semblance of resource avails
 us—
 Shade so finely touched, love's sense
 must seize it.
 Take these lines, look lovingly and
 nearly,
 Lines I write the first time and the
 last time.
 He who works in fresco, steals a hair-
 brush,
 Curbs the liberal hand, subservient
 proudly,
 Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in
 little,
 Makes a strange art of an art fami-
 liar,
 Fills his lady's missal-marge with
 flowerets.
 He who blows thro' bronze, may
 breathe thro' silver,

Fitly serenade a slumbrous prin-
 cess.
 He who writes, may write for once,
 as I do.

XV

Love, you saw me gather men and
 women,
 Live or dead or fashioned by my
 fancy,
 Enter each and all, and use their
 service.
 Speak from every mouth,—the speech,
 a poem.
 Hardly shall I tell my joys and
 sorrows,
 Hopes and fears, belief and disbe-
 lieving :
 I am mine and yours—the rest be
 all men's,
 Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the
 fifty.
 Let me speak this once in my true
 person,
 Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea,
 Though the fruit of speech be just
 this sentence—
 Pray you, look on these my men and
 women,
 Take and keep my fifty poems
 finished ;
 Where my heart lies, let my brain
 lie also !
 Poor the speech ; be how I speak,
 for all things.

XVI

Not but that you know me ! Lo,
 the moon's self !
 Here in London, yonder late in
 Florence,
 Still we find her face, the thrice-
 transfigured.
 Curving on a sky imbrued with
 colour,
 Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
 Came she, our new crescent of a
 hair's-breadth.
 Full she flared it, lamping San-
 miniato,

Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and
rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, im-
poverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the
house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of
silver,
Goes dispiritedly,—glad to finish

XVII

What, there's nothing in the moon
noteworthy?
Nay—for if that moon could love a
mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a
fancy)
All her magic ('tis the old sweet
mythos)
She would turn a new side to her
mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman,
steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—
him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck
mortal—
When she turns round, comes again
in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or
better?
Proves she like some portent of an
iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it
founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered
crystals?
Proves she as the paved-work of a
sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the
mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the
Highest,
Stand upon the paved-work of a
sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clear
ness

Shone the stone, the sapphire of that
paved-work,
When they ate and drank and saw
God also!

XVIII

What were seen? None knows, none
ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were
other,
Not the moon's same side, born late
in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in
London.
God be thanked, the meanest of His
creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the
world with,
One to show a woman when he loves
her.

XIX

This I say of me, but think of you,
Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of
poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side—
there's the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think
they know you.
There, in turn I stand with them and
praise you,
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out
them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twi
light,
Come out on the other side, the
novel
Silent silver lights and darks un-
dreamed of.
Where I hush and bless myself with
silence.

XX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Ma-
donnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I
sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my
bosom!

BEN KARSHOOK'S WISDOM.

I

" ' WOULD a man 'scape the rod ' ?—
 Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
 ' See that he turns to God
 The day before his death.'

' Ay, could a man inquire
 When it shall come,' I say;
 The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
 ' Then let him turn to-day.'

II

Quoth a young Sadducee—
 ' Reader of many rolls,

Is it so certain we

Have, as they tell us, souls? '—

' Son, there is no reply !'
 The Rabbi bit his beard :
 ' Certain, a soul have I—
 We may have none,' he sneer'd.

Thus Karshook, the Hiram's-Hammer,
 The Right-Hand Temple Column.
 Taught babes their grace in gram-
 mar,
 And struck the simple, solemn."

Note.—In Mr. Sharp's "Life of Browning," it is stated that in the late spring of 1854 Browning wrote the poem "Ben Karshook's Wisdom" to appear in one of the then popular *Keepsakes*; that it was omitted from "Men and Women" by accident; and from further collections by forgetfulness. As the poem has a value of its own, and is quite in Browning's style, it has been thought right to add it to this edition of "Men and Women."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

1864

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

I.—JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW

I

Ah, Love, but a day
And the world has changed !
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged ;
The wind has dropped.
And the sky's deranged :
Summer has stopped.

II

Look in my eyes !
Wilt thou change too ?
Should I fear surprise ?
Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year ?

III

Thou art a man,
But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan ;
For the dell, its dove ;
And for thee — (oh, haste !)
Me to bend above,
Me, to hold embraced.

II.—BY THE FIRESIDE

I

Is all our fire of shipwreck wood,
Oak and pine ?
Oh, for the ills half-understood,
The dim dead woe
Long ago

Befallen this bitter coast of France !
Well, poor sailors took their chance :
I take mine.

II

A ruddy shaft our fire must shoot
O'er the sea :
Do sailors eye the casement—mute,
Drenched and stark.
From their bark—
And envy, gnash their teeth for
hate
O' the warm safe house and happy
freight
—Thee and me ?

III

God help you, sailors, at your need !
Spare the curse !
For some ships, safe in port indeed,
Rot and rust.
Run to dust.
All through worms i' the wood, which
crept.
Gnawed our hearts out while we
slept :
That is worse.

IV

Who lived here before us two ?
Old-world pairs.
Did a woman ever—would I knew !
Watch the man
With whom began
Love's voyage full-sail,—(now, gnash
your teeth !)
When planks start, open hell beneath
Unawares ?

III.—IN THE DOORWAY

I

The swallow has set her six young on
the rail.

And looks seaward :

The water's in stripes like a snake,
olive-pale

To the leeward —

On the weather-side, black, spotted
white with the wind.

" Good fortune departs, and disaster's
behind."

Hark, the wind with its wants and its
infinite wail !

II

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the salt-
ness, has furled

Her five fingers.

Each leaf like a hand opened wide to
the world

Where there lingers

No glint of the gold. Summer sent for
her sake :

How the vines writhe in rows, each
impaled on its stake !

My heart shrivels up and my spirit
shrinks curled.

III

Yet here are we two ; we have love
house enough.

With the field there,

This house of four rooms that field red
and rough.

Though it yield there,

For the rabbit that robs scarce a blade
or a bent ;

If a magpie alight now, it seems an
event ;

And they both will be gone at No-
vember's rebuff.

IV

But why must cold speed — but where-
fore bring change

To the spirit,

God meant should mate his with an
infinite range,

And inherit

His power to put life in the darkness
and cold ?

Oh, live and love worthily, bear and
be bold !

Whom Summer made friends of, let
Winter estrange !

IV.—ALONG THE BEACH

I

I WILL be quiet and talk with you,
And reason why you are wrong.
You wanted my love—is that much
true ?

And so I did love, so I do :

What has come of it all along ?

II

I took you—how could I otherwise ?

For a world to me, and more ;

For all, love greatens and glorifies

Till God's a-glow, to the loving eyes,
In what was mere earth before.

III

Yes, earth—yes, mere ignoble earth !

Now do I mis-state, mistake ?

Do I wrong your weakness and call it
worth ?

Expect all harvest, dread no dearth.

Seal my sense up for your sake ?

IV

Oh, Love, Love, no, Love ! not so,
indeed !

You were just weak earth, I knew :

With much in you waste, with many a
weed,

And plenty of passions run to seed.

But a little good grain too.

V

And such as you were, I took you for
mine :

Did not you find me yours,

To watch the olive and wait the
vine.
And wonder when rivers of oil and
wine
Would flow, as the Book assures?

VI

Well, and if none of these good things
came,
What did the failure prove?
The man was my whole world, all the
same,
With his flowers to praise or his weeds
to blame,
And, either or both, to love.

VII

Yet this turns now to a fault—there!
there!
That I do love, watch too long,
And wait too well, and weary and
wear;
And 'tis all an old story, and my
despair
Fit subject for some new song.

VIII

“How the light, light love, he has
wings to fly
“At suspicion of a bond:
“My wisdom has bidden your pleasure
good-bye,
“Which will turn up next in a laugh-
ing eye,
“And why should you look be-
yond?”

V.—ON THE CLIFF

I

I LEANED on the turf,
I looked at a rock
Left dry by the surf;
For the turf, to call it grass were to
mock:
Dead to the roots, so deep was done
The work of the summer sun.

II

And the rock lay flat
As an anvil's face:
No iron like that!
Baked dry; of a weed, of a shell, no
trace:
Sunshine outside, but ice at the
core,
Death's altar by the lone shore.

III

On the turf, sprang gay
With his films of blue.
No cricket, I'll say,
But a warhorse, barded and chan-
froned too,
The gift of a quixote-mage to his
knight,
Real fairy, with wings all right.

IV

On the rock, they scorch
Like a drop of fire
From a brandished torch,
Fall two red fans of a butterfly:
No turf, no rock: in their ugly stead,
See, wonderful blue and red!

V

Is it not so
With the minds of men?
The level and low,
The burnt and bare, in themselves;
but then
With such a blue and red grace, not
theirs, --
Love settling unawares!

VI.—READING A BOOK, UNDER
THE CLIFF

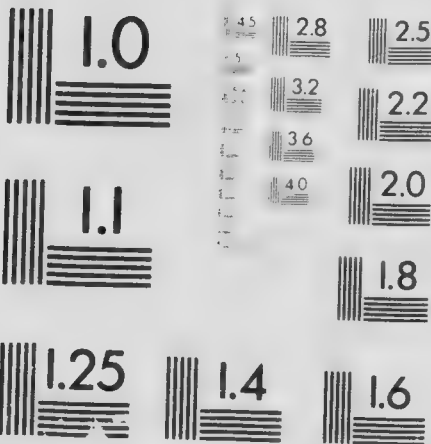
I

“STILL ailing, Wind? Wilt be ap-
peased or no?
“Which needs the other's office
thou or I?



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"Dost want to be disburthened of a
woe.

"And can, in truth, my voice
untie

"Its links, and let it go?

II

"Art thou a dumb wronged thing
that would be righted,

"Entrusting thus thy cause to me?
Forbear!

"No tongue can mend such plead-
ings; faith, requited

With falsehood,—love, at last aware

"Of scorn,—hopes, early blighted,

III

"We have them; but I know not
any tone

"So fit as thine to falter forth a
sorrow;

"Dost think men would go mad
without a moan.

"If they knew any way to borrow

"A pathos like thy own?

IV

"Which sigh wouldst mock, of all
the sighs? The one

"So long escaping from lips starved
and blue.

"That lasts while on her pallet-bed
the nun

"Stretches her length: her foot
comes through

"The straw she shivers on;

V

"You had not thought she was so
tall: and spent,

"Her shrunk lids open, her lean
fingers shut

"Close, close, their sharp and livid
nails indent

"The clumsy palm; then all
mute:

"That way, the spirit went.

VI

"Or wouldst thou rather that I
understand

"Thy will to help me? like the
dog I found

"Once, pacing sad this solitary
strand,

"Who would not take my food,
poor hound.

"But whined and licked my hand."

VII

All this, and more, comes from some
young man's pride

Of power to see,—in failure and
mistake,

Relinquishment, disgrace, on every
side,

Merely examples for his sake,

Helps to his path untried:

VIII

Instances he must—simply recognize?

Oh, more than so!—must, with a
learner's zeal.

Make doubly prominent, twice em-
phasize,

By added touches that reveal

The god in babe's disguise.

IX

Oh, he knows what defeat means,
and the rest!

Himself the undefeated that shall
be:

Failure, disgrace, he flings them you
to test,—

His triumph, in eternity

Too plainly manifest!

X

Whence, judge if he learn forthwith
what the wind

Means in its moaning—by the
happy prompt

Instinctive way of youth, I mean;
for kind

Calm years, exacting their account
Of pain, mature the mind:

XI

'Tis some midsummer morning, at
the lull
Just about daybreak, as he looks
across
A sparkling foreign country, won-
derful
To the sea's edge for gloom and
gloss.
Next minute must annul,—

XII

Then, when the wind begins among
the vines,
So low, so low, what shall it say
but this?
"Here is the change beginning, here
the lines
"Circumscribe beauty, set to bliss
"The limit time assigns."

XIII

Nothing can be as it has been before ;
Better, so call it, only not the same.
To draw one beauty into our hearts'
core.
And keep it changeless ! such our
claim ;
So answered,—Never more !

XIV

Simple? Why this is the old woe o'
the world ;
Tune, to whose rise and fall we
live and die.
Rise with it, then ! Rejoice that
man is hurled
From change to change unceas-
ingly,
His soul's wings never furled !

XV

That's a new question ; still replies
the fact,
Nothing endures : the wind moans,
saying so ;
We moan in acquiescence : there's
life's pact,
Perhaps probation—do I know ?
God does : endure his act !

XVI

Only, for man, how bitter not to
grave
On his soul's hands' palms one
fair good wise thing
Just as he grasped it ! For himself,
death's wave ;
While time first washes—ah, the
sting !—
O'er all he'd sink to save.

VII.—AMONG THE ROCKS

I

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown
old earth,
This autumn morning ! How he
sets his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out
knees and feet
For the ripple to run over in its mirth ;
Listening the while, where on the
heap of stones
The white breast of the sea-lark
twitters sweet.

II

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient,
true ;
Such is life's trial, as old earth
smiles and knows.
If you loved only what were worth
your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well
for you :
Make the low nature better by your
throes !
Give earth yourself, go up for gain
above !

VIII.—BESIDE THE DRAWING
BOARD

I

"As like as a Hand to another
Hand !"
Whoever said that foolish thing,
Could not have studied to understand

The counsels of God in fashioning,
 Out of the infinite love of his heart.
 This Hand, whose beauty I praise,
 apart
 From the world of wonder left to
 praise,
 If I tried to learn the other ways
 Of love in its skill, or love in its power.
 "As like as a Hand to another
 Hand":

Who said that, never took his stand,
 Found and followed, like me, an hour,
 The beauty in this,—how free, how
 fine

To fear, almost,—of the limit-line!
 As I looked at this, and learned and
 drew,

Drew and learned, and looked again,
 While fast the happy minutes flew,
 Its beauty mounted into my brain,
 And a fancy seized me; I was fain
 To efface my work, begin anew,
 Kiss what before I only drew;

Ay, laying the red chalk 'twixt my
 lips,
 With soul to help if the mere lips
 failed,

I kissed all right where the drawing
 ailed,
 Kissed fast the grace that somehow
 slips

Still from one's soulless finger-tips.

II

'Tis a clay cast, the perfect thing,
 From Hand live once, dead long
 ago:

Princess-like it wears the ring
 To fancy's eye, by which we know
 That here at length a master found

His match, a proud lone soul its
 mate,

As soaring genius sank to ground,
 And pencil could not emulate
 The beauty in this,—how free, how
 fine

To fear almost!—of the limit-line.
 Long ago the god, like me
 The worm, learned, each in our
 degree:

Looked and loved, learned and drew,
 Drew and learned and loved again.
 While fast the happy minutes flew,
 Till beauty mounted into his brain
 And on the finger which outvied
 His art he placed the ring that's
 there.

Still by fancy's eye descried,
 In token of a marriage rare:
 For him on earth, his art's despair,
 For him in heaven, his soul's fit
 bride.

III

Little girl with the poor coarse hand
 I turned from to a cold clay
 cast—

I have my lesson, understand
 The worth of flesh and blood at
 last.

Nothing but beauty in a Hand?
 Because he could not change the
 hue,

Mend the lines and make them
 true

To this which met his soul's de-
 mand,—

Would Da Vinci turn from you?
 I hear him laugh my woes to scorn—

"The fool forsooth is all forlorn

"Because the beauty, she thinks best,

"Lived long ago or was never
 born,—

"Because no beauty bears the test

"In this rough peasant Hand! Con-
 fessed!

"Art is null and study void!"

"So sayest thou? So said not I,

"Who threw the faulty pencil by,

"And years instead of hours em-
 ployed,

"Learning the veritable use

"Of flesh and bone and nerve
 beneath

"Lines and hue of the outer sheath,

"If haply I might reproduce

"One motive of the powers profuse,

"Flesh and bone and nerve that make

"The poorest coarsest human hand

"An object worthy to be scanned

"A whole life long for their sole sake.

"Shall earth and the cramped
moment-space

"Yield the heavenly crowning grace?

"Now the parts and then the whole!

"Who art thou, with stunted soul

"And stunted body, thus to cry

"I love,—shall that be life's strait
dole?

"I must live beloved or die!"

"This peasant hand that spins the
wool

"And bakes the bread, way lives
it on,

"Poor and coarse with beauty
gone,—

"What use survives the beauty?"
Fool!

Go, little girl with the poor coarse
hand!

I have my lesson, shall understand.

IX.—ON DECK

I

THERE is nothing to remember in me,

Nothing I ever said with a grace,

Nothing I did that you care to see,

Nothing I was that deserves a
place

In your mind, now I leave you, set
you free.

II

Conceded! In turn, concede to me,

Such things have been as a mutual
flame.

Your soul's locked fast; but, love for
a key,

You might let it loose, till I grew
the same

In your eyes, as in mine you stand:
strange plea!

III

For then, then, what would it matter
to me

That I was the harsh ill-favoured
one?

We both should be like as pea and
pea;

It was ever so since the world
began:

So, let me proceed with my reverie.

IV

How strange it were if you had all
me.

As I have all you in my heart and
brain,

You, whose least word brought gloom
or glee,

Who never lifted the hand in vain—

Will hold mine yet, from over the
sea!

V

Strange, if a face, when you thought
of me,

Rose like your own face present
now,

With eyes as dear in their due degree,
Much such a mouth, and as bright

a brow,

Till you saw yourself, while you
cried "'Tis She!"

VI

Well, you may, you must, set down
to me

Love that was life, life that was
love;

A tenure of breath at your lips' decree,

A passion to stand as your thoughts
approve,

A rapture to fall where your foot
might be.

VII

But did one touch of such love for
me

Come in a word or a look of yours,
Whose words and looks will, circling,

flee

Round me and round while life
endures.—

Could I fancy "As I feel, thus feels
he";

VIII

Why, fade you might to a thing like
me,
And your hair grow these coarse
hanks of hair,
Your skin, this bark of a gnarled
tree,—
You might turn myself!--should I
know or care
When I should be dead of joy, James
Lee?

GOLD HAIR:

A STORY OF PORNIC

I

Oh, the beautiful girl, too white,
Who lived at Pornic, down by the
sea,
Just where the sea and the Loire
unite!
And a boasted name in Brittany
She bore, which I will not write.

II

Too white, for the flower of life is
red;
Her flesh was the soft seraphic
screen
Of a soul that is meant (her parents
said)
To just see earth, and hardly be
seen,
And blossom in heaven instead.

III

Vet earth saw one thing, one how
fair!
One grace that grew to its full on
earth;
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek
so spare
And her waist want half a girdle's
girth.
But she had her great gold hair.

IV

Hair, such a wonder of flax and floss,
Freshness and fragrance floods of
it, too!
Gold, did I say? Nay, gold's mere
dross:
Here, Life smiled, "Think what I
meant to do!"
And Love sighed, "Fancy my loss!"

V

So, when she died, it was scarce
more strange
Than that, when delicate evening
dies,
And you follow its spent sun's pallid
range,
There's a shoot of colour startles
the skies
With sudden, violent change,—

VI

That, while the breath was nearly
to seek,
As they put the little cross to her
lips,
She changed; a spot came out on
her cheek,
A spark from her eye in mid-
eclipse,
And she broke forth, "I must
speak!"

VII

"Not my hair!" made the girl her
moan
"All the rest is gone or to go;
"But the last, last grace, my all, my
own,
"Let it stay in the grave, that the
ghosts may know!
"Leave my poor gold hair alone!"

VIII

The passion thus vented, dead lay
she;
Her parents sobbed their worst on
that;

All friends joined in, nor observed
degree:

For indeed the hair was to wonder
at,
As it spread—not flowing free.

IX

But curled around her brow, like a
crown,

And coiled beside her cheeks, like
a cap.

And calmed about her neck—ay,
down

To her breast, pressed flat, without
a gap

If the gold, it reached her gown.

X

All kissed that face, like a silver
wedge

'Mid the yellow wealth, nor dis-
turbed its hair:

E'en the priest allowed death's privi-
lege,

As he planted the crucifix with
care

On her breast, 'twixt edge and edge.

XI

And thus was she buried, inviolate

Of body and soul, in the very
space

By the altar; keeping saintly state

In Pornic church, for her pride
of race,

Pure life and piteous fate.

XII

And in after-time would your fresh
tear fall,

Though your mouth might twitch
with a dubious smile,

As they told you of gold, both robe
and pall.

How she prayed them leave it alone
awhile,

So it never was touched at all.

XIII

Years flew; this legend grew at last
The life of the lady; all she had
done,

All been, in the memories fading fast
Of lover and friend, was summed
in one

Sentence survivors passed:

XIV

To wit, she was meant for heaven,
not earth;

Had turned an angel before the
time:

Yet, since she was mortal, in such
dearth

Of frailty, all you could count a
crime

Was—she knew her gold hair's
worth.

XV

At little pleasant Pornic church,

It chanced, the pavement wanted
repair,

Was taken to pieces: left in the
lurch,

A certain sacred space lay bare,
And the boys began research.

XVI

'Twas the space where our sires
would lay a saint,

A benefactor,—a bishop, suppose,

A baron with armour-adornments
quaint,

Dame with chased ring and jewelled
rose,

Things sanctity saves from taint;

XVII

So we come to find them in after-
days

When the corpse is presumed to
have done with gauds

Of use to the living, in many ways:

For the boys get pelf, and the
town applauds,

And the church deserves the praise.

XVIII

They grubbed with a wail: and at length — *O cor*

Humanum, pectora — and the rest!

They found—no good they were prying for,

No ring, no rose, but—who would have guessed?

A double Louis-d'or!

XIX

Here was a case for the priest to be heard,

Marked, inwardly digested, laid finger on nose, smiled, "There's a bird

"Chirps in my ear": then, "Bring a spade,

"Dig deeper!"—he gave the word.

XX

And lo, when they came to the coffin-lid,

Or rotten planks which composed it once,

Why, there lay the girl's skull wedged amid

A mint of money, it served for the nonce

To hold in its hair-heaps hid!

XXI

Hid there? Why? Could the girl be wont

(She the stainless soul) to treasure up

Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront?

Had a spider found out the communion-cup,

Was a toad in the christening-font?

XXII

Truth is truth: too true it was.

Gold! She hoarded and hugged it first,

Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it—alas

Till the humour grew to a head and burst.

And she cried, at the final pass,—

XXIII

"Talk not of God, my heart is stone!

"Nor lover nor friend—be gold for both!

"Gold I lack: and, my all, my own,

"It shall hid, in my hair— I scarce die both

"If they let my hair alone!"

XXIV

Louis-d'or, some six times five,

And duly double, every piece.

Now do you see? With the priest to strive,

With parents preventing her soul's release

By kisses that kept alive,

XXV

With heaven's gold gates about to ope,

With friends' praise, gold-like, lingering still,

An instinct had bidden the girl's hand grope

For gold, the true sort—"Gold in heaven, if you will;

"But I keep earth's too, I hope."

XXVI

Enough! The priest took the grave's grim yield:

The parents, they eyed that price of sin

As if *thirty pieces* lay revealed

On the place to *bury strangers in*,
The hideous Potter's Field.

XXVII

But the priest bethought him: "'Milk that's pilt'

"You know the adage! Watch and pray!

"Saints tumble to earth with so slight
a tilt!

"It would build a new altar; that,
we may!"

And the altar therewith was built.

XXVIII

Why I deliver this horrible verse?

As the text of a sermon, which now
I preach:

Evil or good may be better or worse

In the human heart, but the mixture
of each

Is a marvel and a curse.

XXIX

The candid incline to surmise of late
That the Christian faith proves
false, I find:

For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate

Begins to tell on the public mind

And Colenso's words have weight:

XXX

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to
begin:

'Tis the faith that launched point-
blank her dart

At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,

The Corruption of Man's Heart.

THE WORST OF IT

I

WOULD it were I had been false, not
you!

I that am nothing, not you that are
all:

I, never the worse for a touch or two
On my speckled hide; not you, the
pride

Of the day, my swan, that a first fleck's
fall

On her wonder of white must un-
swan, undo!

II

I had dipped in life's struggle and, out
again,

Bore specks of it here, there, easy to
see,

When I found my swan and the cure
was plain:

The dull turned bright as I caught
your white

On my bosom: you saved me—saved
in vain

If you ruined yourself, and all
through me!

III

Yes, all through the speckled beast
that I am.

Who taught you to stoop; you
gave me yourself,

And bound your soul by the vows
that damn:

Since on better thought you break,
as you ought.

Vows—words, no angel set down,
some elf

Mistook,—for an oath, an epigram!

IV

Yes, might I judge you, here were
my heart,

And a hundred its like, to treat as
you pleased!

I choose to be yours, for my proper
part,

Yours, leave or take, or mar me
or make:

If I acquiesce, why should you be
teased

With the conscience-prick and the
memory-smart?

V

But what will God say? Oh, my
sweet.

Think, and be sorry you did this
thing

Though earth were unworthy to feel
your feet,

There's a heaven above may
 deserve your love :
 Should you forfeit heaven for a snapt
 gold ring
 And a promise broke, were it just
 or meet ?

VI

And I to have tempted you ! I,
 who tired
 Your soul, no doubt, till it sank !
 Unwise,
 I loved and was lowly, loved and
 aspired,
 Loved, grieving or glad, till I made
 you mad,
 And you meant to have hated and
 despised--
 Whereas, you deceived me not
 inquired !

VII

She, ruined ? How ? No heaven
 for her ?
 Crown's to give, and none for the
 brow
 That looked like marble and smelt
 like myrrh ?
 Shall the robe be worn, and the
 palm-branch borne,
 And she go graceless, she graced
 now
 Beyond all saints, as themselves
 aver ?

VIII

Hardly ! That must be understood !
 The earth is your place of penance,
 then ;
 And what will it prove ? I desire
 your good,
 But, plot as I may, I can find no
 way
 How a blow should fall, such as falls
 on men,
 Nor prove too much for your
 womanhood.

IX

It will come, I suspect, at the end of
 life,
 When you walk alone, and review
 the past ;
 And I, who so long shall have done
 with strife,
 And journeyed my stage and earned
 my wage
 And retired as was right---I am
 called at last
 When the devil stabs you, to lend
 the knife.

X

He stabs for the minute of trivial
 wrong,
 Nor the other hours are able to
 save,
 The happy, that lasted my whole life
 long :
 For a promise broke, not for first
 words spoke,
 The true, the only, that turn my
 grave
 To a blaze of joy and a crash of
 song.

XI

Witness beforehand ! Off I trip
 On a safe path gay through the
 flowers you flung :
 My very name made great by your
 lip,
 And my heart a-glow with the
 good I know
 Of a perfect year when we both were
 young,
 And I tasted the angels' fellowship.

XII

And witness moreover . . . Ah, but
 wait !
 I spy the loop whence an arrow
 shoots !
 It may be for yourself, when you
 meditate,
 That you grieve—for slain ruth,
 murdered truth.

"Though falsehood escape in the
end, what boots?
"How truth would have triumphed!"
—you sigh too late.

XIII

Ay, who would have triumphed like
you, I say!
Well, it is lost now; well, you
must bear,
Abide and grow fit for a better day:
You should hardly grudge, could I
be your judge!
But hush! For you, can be no
despair:
There's amends: 'tis a secret:
hope and pray!

XIV

For I was true at least—oh, true
enough!
And, Dear, truth is not as good as
it seems!
Commend me to conscience! Idle
stuff!
Much help is in mine, as I mope
and pine,
And skulk through day, and scowl in
my dreams
At my swan's obtaining the crow's
rebuff.

XV

Men tell me of truth now—"False!"
I cry:
Of beauty—"A mask, friend!
Look beneath!"
We take our own method, the devil
and I,
With pleasant and fair and wise and
rare:
And the best we wish to what lives,
is—death;
Which even in wishing, perhaps we
lie!

XVI

Far better commit a fault and have
done—
As you, Dear!—for ever; and
choose the pure,

And look where the healing waters
run,
And strive and strain to be good
again,
And a place in the other world
ensure,
All glass and gold, with God for its
sun.

XVII

Misery! What shall I say or
do?
I cannot advise, or, at least, per-
suade:
Most like, you are glad you deceived
me—rue
No whit of the wrong: you en-
dured too long,
Have done no evil and want no
aid,
Will live the old life out and chance
the new.

XVIII

And your sentence is written all the
same.
And I can do nothing,—pray, per-
haps:
But somehow the world pursues its
game,—
If I pray, if I curse,—for better or
worse:
And my faith is torn to a thousand
scraps,
And my heart feels ice while my
words breathe flame.

XIX

Dear, I look from my hiding-
place.
Are you still so fair? Have you
still the eyes?
Be happy! Add but the other grace,
Be good! Why want what the
angels vaunt?
I knew you once: but in Paradise,
If we meet, I will pass nor turn my
face.

DIS ALITER VISUM; OR, LE
BYRON DE NOS JOURS

I

Stop, let me have the truth of that!

Is that all true? I say, the day
Ten years ago when both of us

Met on a morning, friends—as thus—
We meet this evening, friends or
what?—

II

Did you—because I took your arm
And sillily smiled, “A mass of
brass

“That sea looks, blazing under-
neath!”

While up the cliff-road edged with
heath,

We took the turns nor came to harm—

III

Did you consider “Now makes twice
“That I have seen her, walked and
talked

“With this poor pretty thoughtful
thing,

“Whose worth I weigh: she tries
to sing;

“Draws, hopes in time the eye grows
nice;

IV

“Reads verse and thinks she under-
stands;

“Loves all, at any rate, that’s
great,

“Good, beautiful: but much as
we

“Down at the bath-house love the
sea,

“Who breathe its salt and bruise its
sands:

“While . . . do but follow the fish-
ing-gull

“That flaps and floats from wave
to cove!

“There’s the sea-lover, fair my
friend!

“What then? Be patient, mark
and mend!

“Had you the making of your
scull?”

VI

And did you, when we faced the
church

With spire and sad slate roof, aloof
From human fellowship so far,

Where a few graveyard crosses are,
And garlands for the swallows’
perch,

VII

Did you determine, as we stepped
O’er the lone stone fence, “Let
me get

“Her for myself, and what’s the
earth

“With all its art, verse, music,
worth—

“Compared with love, found, gained,
and kept?

VIII

“Schumann’s our music-maker now;
“Has his march-movement youth
and mouth?

“Ingres’s the modern man that
paints;

“Which will lean on me, of his
saints?

“Heine for songs; for kisses, how?”

IX

And did you, when we entered,
reached

The votive frigate, soft aloft
Riding on air this hundred years,

Safe-smiling at old hopes and
fears,—
Did you draw profit while she
preached?

Resolving. "Fools we wise men
grow!

"Yes, I could easily blurt out curt
"Some question that might find
reply

"As prompt in her stopped lips,
dropped eye,
"And rush of red to cheek and
brow:

XI

"Thus were a match made, sure and
fast.

"Mid the blue weed-flowers
round the mound

"Where, issuing, we shall stand and
stay

"For one more look at baths and
bay,

"Sands, sea-gulls, and the old church
last—

XII

"A match 'twixt me, bent, wigged
and lamed,

"Famous, however, for verse and
worse,

"Sure of the Fortieth spare Arm-
chair

"When gout and glory seat me
there,

"So, one whose love-freaks pass un-
blamed,—

XIII

"And this young beauty, round and
sound

"As a mountain-apple, youth and
truth

"With loves and doves, at all events

"With money in the Three per
Cents;

"Whose choice of me would seem
profound:—

XIV

"She might take me as I take her
"Perfect the hour would pass
alas!

"Climb high, love high, what matter?
Still,

"Feet, feelings, must descend the
hill.

"An hour's perfection can't recur.

XV

"Then follows Paris and full time

"For both to reason: 'Thus with
us!'

"She'll sigh, "Thus girls give body
and soul

"At first word, think they gain
the goal.

"When 'tis the starting-place they
climb!

XVI

"My friend makes verse and gets
renown;

"Have they all fifty years, his
peers?

"He knows the world, firm, quiet
and gay;

"Boys will become as much one
day;

"They're fools; he cheats, with
beard less brown.

XVII

"For boys say, *Love me or I die!*

"He did not say, *The truth is,*
youth

"I want, *who am old and know too*
much:

"I'd catch youth: *lend me sight*
and touch!

"Drop heart's blood where life's
wheels grate dry!"

XVIII

"While I should make rejoinder"—
(then

It was, no doubt, you ceased that
least

Light pressure of my arm in yours)
 "I can conceive of cheaper cures
 "For a yawning-fit o'er books and
 men.

XIX

"What? All I am, was, and might
 be,
 "All, books taught, art brought,
 life's whole strife,
 "Painful results since precious, just
 "Were fitly exchanged, in wise
 disgust,
 "For two cheeks freshened by youth
 and sea?

XX

"All for a nosegay! -what came first;
 "With fields on flower, untried
 each side;
 "I rally, need my books and men.
 "And find a nosegay': drop it,
 then,
 "No match yet made for best or
 worst!"

XXI

That ended me. You judged the
 porch
 We left by, Norman; took our look
 At sea and sky; wondered so few
 Find out the place for air and view;
 Remarked the sun began to scorch;

XXII

Descended, soon regained the baths.
 And then, good-bye! Years ten
 since then:
 Ten years! We meet: you tell me,
 now,
 By a window-seat for that cliff-brow,
 On carpet-stripes for those sand-paths.

XXIII

Now I may speak: you fool, for all
 Your lore! Who made things
 plain in vain?

What was the sea for? What, the
 grey
 Sad church, that solitary day,
 Crosses and graves and swallows' call?

XXIV

Was there nought better than to
 enjoy?
 No feat which, done, would make
 time break,
 And let us pent-up creatures through
 Into eternity, our due?
 No forcing earth teach heaven's
 employ?

XXV

No wise beginning, here and now,
 What cannot grow complete (earth's
 feat)
 And heaven must finish, there and
 then?
 No tasting earth's true food for
 men,
 Its sweet in sad, its sad in sweet?

XXVI

No grasping at love, gaining a share
 O' the sole spark from God's life at
 strife
 With death, so, sure of range above
 The limits here? For us and love,
 Failure; but, when God fails, despair.

XXVII

This you call wisdom? Thus you add
 Good unto good again, in vain?
 You loved, with body worn and
 weak:
 I loved, with faculties to seek:
 Were both loves worthless since ill-
 clad?

XXVIII

Let the mere star-fish in his vault
 Crawl in a wash of weed, indeed,
 Rose-jacynth to the finger-tips:
 He, whole in body and soul, out-
 strips
 Man, found with either in default.

XXIX

But what's whole, can increase no
more,
Is dwarfed and dies, since here's
its sphere
The devil laughed at you in his
sleeve!
You knew not? That I well
believe;
Or you had saved two souls: nay,
four.

XXX

For Stephanie sprained last night her
wrist,
Ankle or something. "Pooh," cry
you?
At any rate she danced, all say,
Vilely: her vogue has had its day.
Here comes my husband from his
whist.

TOO LATE

I

HERE was I with my arm and heart
And brain, all yours for a word, a
want
Put into a look—just a look, your
part,—
While mine, to repay it . . .
vainest vaunt,
Were the woman, that's dead, alive
to hear,
Had her lover, that's lost, love's
proof to show!
But I cannot show it; you cannot
speak
From the churchyard neither, miles
removed,
Though I feel by a pulse within my
cheek,
Which stabs and stops, that the
woman I loved
Needs help in her grave and finds
none near,
Wants warmth from the heart
which sends it—so!

II

Did I speak once angrily, all the
dear days
You lived, you woman I loved so
well.
Who married the other? Blame or
praise,
Where was the use then? Time
would tell,
And the end declare what man for
you,
What woman for me, was the
choice of God.
But, Edith dead! no doubting
more!
I used to sit and look at my life
As it rippled and ran till, right
before,
A great stone stopped it: oh, the
strife
Of waves at the stone some devil
threw
In my life's midcurrent, thwarting
God!

III

But either I thought, "They may
churn and chide
"Awhile, my waves which came
for their joy
"And found this horrible stone full-
tide:
"Yet I see just a thread escape,
deploy
"Through the evening-country, silent
and safe,
"And it suffers no more till it
finds the sea."
Or else I would think, "Perhaps
some night
"When new things happen, a
meteor-ball
"May slip through the sky in a line
of light,
"And earth breathe hard, and
landmarks fall,
"And my waves no longer champ
nor chafe,
"Since a stone will have rolled
from its place: let be!"

IV

But, dead! All's done with: wait
 who may,
 Watch and wear and wonder who
 will.
 Oh, my whole life that ends to-
 day!
 Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding
 still,
 "The woman is dead that was none
 of his;
 "And the man that was none of
 hers may go!"
 There's only the past left: worry
 that!
 Wreak, like a bull, on the empty
 coat.
 Rage, its late wearer is laughing at!
 Tear the collar to rags, having
 missed his throat:
 Strike stupidly on—"This, this and
 this,
 "Where I would that a bosom
 received the blow!"

V

I ought to have done more: once my
 speech,
 And once your answer, and there,
 the end,
 And Edith was henceforth out of
 reach!
 Why, men do more to deserve a
 friend.
 Be rid of a foe, get rich, grow
 wise,
 Nor, folding their arms, stare fate
 in the face.
 Why, better even have burst like a
 thief
 And borne you away to a rock for
 us two,
 In a moment's horror, bright, bloody
 and brief:
 Then changed to myself again—
 "I slew
 "Myself in that moment; a ruffian
 lies
 "Somewhere: your slave, see, born
 in his place!"

VI

What did the other do? You be
 judge!
 Look at us, Edith! Here are we
 both!
 Give him his six whole years: I
 grudge
 None of the life with you, nay,
 loathe
 Myself that I grudged his start in
 advance
 Of me who could overtake and
 pass.
 But, as if he loved you! No, not
 he,
 Nor anyone else in the world, 'tis
 plain:
 Who ever heard that another, free
 As I, young, prosperous, sound and
 sane,
 Poured life out, proffered it—"Half
 a glance
 "Of those eyes of yours and I drop
 the glass!"

VII

Handsome, were you? 'Tis more
 than they held,
 More than they said; I was 'ware
 and watched:
 I was the 'scapegrace, this rat belled
 The cat, this fool got his whiskers
 scratched:
 The others? No head that was
 turned, no heart
 Broken, my lady, assure yourself!
 Each soon made his mind up; so and
 so
 Married a dancer, such and such
 Stole his friend's wife, stagnated slow,
 Or maundered, unable to do as
 much,
 And muttered of peace where he had
 no part:
 While, hid in the closet, laid on the
 shelf,—

VIII

On the whole, you were let alone. I
 think!
 So, you looked to the other, who
 acquiesced:

My rival, the proud man,—prize your
pink
Of poets! A poet he was! I've
guessed:
He rhymed you his rubbish nobody
read,
Loved you and doved you—did not
I laugh!
There was a prize! But we both were
tried.
Oh, heart of mine, marked broad
with her mark,
Tekel, found wanting, set aside,
Scorned! See, I bleed these tears
in the dark
Till comfort come and the last be
bled:
He? He is tagging your epitaph.

IX

If it would only come over again!
—Time to be patient with me, and
probe
This heart till you punctured the
proper vein,
Just to learn what blood is: twitch
the robe
From that blank lay-figure your fancy
draped.
Prick the leathern heart till the—
verses spirt!
And late it was easy; late, you
walked
Where a friend might meet you;
Edith's name
Arose to one's lip if one laughed or
talked;
If I heard good news, you heard
the same;
When I woke, I knew that your
breath escaped;
I could bide my time, keep alive,
alert.

X

And alive I shall keep and long, you
will see!
I knew a man, was kicked like
a dog
From gutter to cesspool; what cared
he

So long as he picked from the filth
his prog?
He saw youth, beauty and genius
die,
And jollily lived to his hundredth
year.
But I will live otherwise: none of
such life!
At once I begin as I mean to end.
Go on with the world, get gold in
its strife,
Give your spouse the slip and
betray your friend!
There are two who decline, a woman
and I,
And enjoy our death in the dark-
ness here.

XI

I liked that way you had with your
curls
Wound to a ball in a net behind:
Your cheek was chaste as a quaker-
girl's,
And your mouth—there was never,
to my mind,
Such a funny mouth, for it would not
shut;
And the dented chin too—what a
chin!
There were certain ways when you
spoke, some words
That you know you never could
pronounce:
You were thin, however; like a
bird's
Your hand seemed—some would
say, the pounce!
Of a scaly-footed hawk—all but!
The world was right when it called
you thin.

XII

But I turn my back on the world:
I take
Your hand, and kneel, and lay
to my lips.
Bid me live, Edith! Let me slake
Thirst at your presence! Fear no
slips:

¹ Talon.

'Tis your slave shall pay, while his
 soul endures,
 Full due, love's whole debt,
summum jus.
 My queen shall have high observance,
 planned
 Courtship made perfect, no least
 line
 Crossed without warrant. There you
 stand,
 Warm too, and white too: would
 this wine
 Had washed all over that body of
 yours,
 Ere I drank it, and you down
 with it, thus!

ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZ-
 ING UPON THE MUSICAL IN-
 STRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

[The Abbé Vogler, born 1749.
 Court Chaplain at Mannheim. Im-
 proved the organ. Visited London,
 1790. Died at Darmstadt, 1814.]

I

WOULD that the structure brave, the
 manifold music I build,
 Bidding my organ obey, calling its
 keys to their work,
 Claiming each slave of the sound, at
 a touch, as when Solomon willed
 Armies of angels that soar, legions
 of demons that lurk,
 Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end
 and of aim,
 Adverse, each from the other hea-
 ven-high, hell-deep removed,—
 Should rush into sight at once as he
 named the ineffable Name,
 And pile him a palace straight, to
 pleasure the princess he loved!

II

Would it might tarry like his, the
 beautiful building of mine,
 This which my keys in a crowd
 pressed and importuned to raise!

Ah, one and all, how they helped,
 would dispart now and now
 combine,
 Zealous to hasten the work, heighten
 their master his praise!
 And one would bury his brow with a
 blind plunge down to hell,
 Burrow awhile and build, broad on
 the roots of things,
 Then up again swim into sight, hav-
 ing based me my palace well.
 Founded it, fearless of flame, flat
 on the nether springs.

III

And another would mount and march,
 like the excellent minion he
 was,
 Ay, another and yet another, one
 crowd but with many a crest,
 Raising my rampired walls of gold
 as transparent as glass,
 Eager to do and die, yield each his
 place to the rest:
 For higher still and higher (as a
 runner tips with fire,
 When a great illumination sur-
 prises a festal night—
 Outlining round and round Rome's
 dome from space to spire)
 Up, the pinnacled glory reached,
 and the pride of my soul was in
 sight.

IV

In sight? Not half! for it seemed,
 it was certain, to match man's
 birth,
 Nature in turn conceived, obeying
 an impulse as I;
 And the emulous heaven yearned
 down, made effort to reach the
 earth,
 As the earth had done her best, in
 my passion, to scale the sky:
 Novel splendours burst forth, grew
 familiar and dwelt with mine,
 Not a point nor peak but found
 and fixed its wandering star;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and
they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven,
there was no more near nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who
walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or,
fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a
kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a
house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have
passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe
in an old world worth their new:
What never had been, was now; what
was, as it shall be anon;
And what is,—shall I say, matched
both? for I was made perfect too.

All through my keys that gave their
sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as
its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For
think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor
the process so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse
—still, effect proceeds from cause.
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye
hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in
obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the
artist-list enrolled:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash
of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made
them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such
gift be allowed to man.

That out of three sounds he frame,
not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our
scale in itself is nought;
It is everywhere in the world—loud,
soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with
two in my thought:
And, there! Ye have heard and
seen: consider and bow the
head!

VIII

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of
music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the
praises that come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce
can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the
gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more
of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance: is
this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I
cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love,
same God: ay, what was, shall
be.

IX

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee,
the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses
not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee
who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the
heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good!
What was, shall live as be-
fore;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence—
implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with,
for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in
the heaven, a perfect round.

A

All we have willed or hoped or
 dreamed of good shall exist;
 Not its semblance, but itself; no
 beauty, nor good, nor power
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each
 survives for the melodist
 When eternity affirms the concep-
 tion of an hour.
 The high that proved too high, the
 heroic for earth too hard,
 The passion that left the ground to
 lose itself in the sky,
 Are music sent up to God by the lover
 and the bard;
 Enough that he heard it once: we
 shall hear it by-and-by.

XI

And what is our failure here but a
 triumph's evidence
 For the fulness of the days? Have
 we withered or agonized?
 Why else was the pause prolonged but
 that singing might issue thence?
 Why rushed the discords in but
 that harmony should be prized?
 Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is
 slow to clear,
 Each sufferer says his say, his
 scheme of the weal and woe:
 But God has a few of us whom he
 whispers in the ear;
 The rest may reason and welcome:
 'tis we musicians know.

XII

Well, it is earth with me; silence
 resumes her reign:
 I will be patient and proud, and
 soberly acquiesce.
 Give me the keys. I feel for the
 common chord again,
 Sliding by semitones, till I sink to
 the minor,—yes,
 And I blunt it into a ninth, and I
 stand on alien ground,
 Surveying awhile the heights I
 rolled from into the deep:

Which, hark, I have dated and done,
 for my resting-place is found.
 The C Major of this life: so, now I
 will try to sleep.

RABBI BEN EZRA

I

GROW old along with me!
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was
 made:
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith "A whole I planned,
 "Youth shows but half; trust God:
 see all nor be afraid!"

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
 Youth sighed "Which rose
 make ours.
 "Which lily leave and then as best
 recall?"
 Not that, admiring stars,
 It yearned "Nor Jove, nor
 Mars:
 "Mine be some figured flame which
 blends, transcends them all!"

III

Not for such hopes and fears
 Annulling youth's brief years,
 Do I remonstrate: folly wide the
 mark!
 Rather I prize the doubt
 Low kinds exist without,
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled
 by a spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
 Were man but formed to feed
 On joy, to solely seek and find and
 feast:
 Such feasting ended, then
 As sure an end to men;
 Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets
 doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not
receive!

A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that
take, I must believe.

VI

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness
rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand
but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the
strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare,
never grudge the throe!

VII

For thence, --a paradox
Which comforts while it
mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to
fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would
not sink i' the scale.

VIII

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit.
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs
want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on
its lone way?

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every
turn:

Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole:
Should not the heart beat once "How
good to live and learn?"

X

Not once beat "Praise be
Thine!
"I see the whole design,
"I, who saw power, see now love
perfect too:
"Perfect I call Thy plan:
"Thanks that I was a man!
"Maker, remake, complete,—I trust
what Thou shalt do!"

XI

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns
for rest;
Would we some prize might
hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most,
as we did best!

XII

Let us not always say
"Spite of this flesh to-day
"I strove, made head, gained ground
upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more,
now, than flesh helps soul!"

XIII

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached
its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god
though in the germ.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave
and new :
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour
to indue.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby ;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is
gold :
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame :
Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall
know, being old.

XVI

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from
the grey :
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
"Take it and try its worth : here dies
another day."

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife.
Let me discern, compare, pronounce
at last,
"This rage was right i' the
main,
"That acquiescence vain :
"The Future I may face now I have
proved the Past."

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns
to-day :

Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of
the tool's true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts
uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught
found made :
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than
tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age : wait
death nor be afraid !

XX

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy
hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor
let thee feel alone.

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from
small,
Announced to each his station in the
Past !
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right ? Let age speak the truth and
give us peace at last !

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate ?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I
receive ;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me : we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that : whom
shall my soul believe ?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
 Called "work," must sentence
 pass,
 Things done, that took the eye and
 had the price;
 O'er which, from level stand,
 The low world laid its hand,
 Found straightway to its mind, could
 value in a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse
 thumb
 And finger failed to plumb,
 So passed in making up the main
 account;
 All instincts immature,
 All purposes unsure,
 That weighed not as his work, yet
 swelled the man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
 Into a narrow act,
 Fancies that broke through language
 and escaped;
 All I could never be,
 All, men ignored in me,
 This, I was worth to God, whose
 wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
 That metaphor! and feel
 Why time spins fast, why passive lies
 our clay, --
 Thou, to whom fools propound,
 When the wine makes its round,
 "Since life fleets, all is change; the
 Past gone, seize to-day!"

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
 Lasts ever, past recall;
 Earth changes, but thy soul and God
 stand sure:

What entered into thee,
 That was, is, and shall be:
 Time's wheel runs back or stops:
 Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
 Of plastic circumstance.
 This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst
 fain arrest:
 Machinery just meant
 To give thy soul its bent,
 Try thee and turn thee forth, suffi-
 ciently impressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves
 Which ran the laughing loves
 Around thy base, no longer pause and
 press?
 What though, about thy rim,
 Skull-things in order grim
 Grow out, in graver mood, obey the
 sterner stress?

XXX

Look not thou down but up!
 To uses of a cup,
 The festal board, lamp's flash and
 trumpet's peal,
 The new wine's foaming flow,
 The Master's lips a-glow!
 Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what
 need'st thou with earth's wheel?

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
 Thee, God, who moulded men;
 And since, not even while the whirl
 was worst,
 Did I,—to the wheel of life
 With shapes and colours rife,
 Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to
 slake Thy thirst:

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work:
 Amend what flaws may lurk.
 What strain o' the stuff, what warp-
 ings past the aim!

My times be in Thy hand !
 Perfect the cup as planned !
 Let age approve of youth, and death
 complete the same !

A DEATH IN THE DESERT

[SUPPOSED of Pamphylax the Antiochene :

It is a parchment, of my rolls the fifth,

Hath three skins glued together, is all Greek

And goeth from *Epsilon* down to *Mu* :

Lies second in the surnamed Chosen Chest,

Stained and conserved with juice of terebinth.

Covered with cloth of hair, and lettered *W*.

From Xanthus, my wife's uncle, now at peace :

Mu and *Epsilon* stand for my own name.

I may not write it, but I make a cross

To show I wait His coming, with the rest,

And leave off here : beginneth Pamphylax.]

I said, "If one should wet his lips with wine,

"And slip the broadest plantain-leaf we find,

"Or else the lappet of a linen robe,

"Into the water-vessel, lay it right,

"And cool his forehead just above the eyes,

"The while a brother, kneeling either side,

"Should chafe each hand and try to make it warm,—

"He is not so far gone but he might speak."

This did not happen in the outer cave,

Nor in the secret chamber of the rock

Where, sixty days since the decree was out,

We had him, bedded on a camel-skin,

And waited for his dying all the while ;

But in the midmost grotto : since noon's light

Reached there a little, and we would not lose

The last of what might happen on his face.

I at the head, and Xanthus at the feet,

With Valens and the Boy, had lifted him.

And brought him from the chamber in the depths,

And laid him in the light where we might see :

For certain smiles began about his mouth,

And his lids moved, presageful of the end.

Beyond, and half way up the mouth o' the cave,

The Bactrian convert, having his desire,

Kept watch, and made pretence to graze a goat

That gave us milk, on rags of various herb,

Plantain and quitch, the rocks' shade keeps alive :

So that if any thief or soldier passed, (Because the persecution was aware)

Yielding the goat up promptly with his life.

Such man might pass on, joyful at a prize,

Nor care to pry into the cool o' the cave.

Outside was all noon and the burning blue.

"Here is wine," answered Xanthus, dropped a drop :

I stooped and placed the lap of cloth aright,

Then chafed his right hand, and the Boy his left :

But Valens had bethought him, and
 produced
 And broke a ball of nard, and made
 perfume.
 Only, he did — not so much wake, as
 turn
 And smile a little, as a sleeper does
 If any dear one call him, touch his
 face
 And smiles and loves, but will not be
 disturbed.

Then Xanthus said a prayer, but
 still he slept:
 It is the Xanthus that escaped to
 Rome,
 Was burned, and could not write the
 chronicle.

Then the Boy sprang up from his
 knees, and ran,
 Stung by the splendour of a sudden
 thought,
 And fetched the seventh plate of
 graven lead
 Out of the secret chamber, found a
 place,
 Pressing with finger on the deeper
 dints.
 And spoke, as 'twere his mouth pro-
 claiming first,
 "I am the Resurrection and the
 Life."

Whereat he opened his eyes wide at
 once,
 And sat up of himself, and looked at
 us:
 And thenceforth nobody pronounced
 a word:
 Only, outside, the Bactrian cried his
 cry
 Like the lone desert-bird that wears
 the ruff,
 As signal we were safe, from time to
 time.

First he said, "If a friend declared
 to me,
 "This my son Valens, this my other
 son,

"Were James and Peter,—nav, de-
 clared as well
 "This lad was very John,—I could
 believe!
 "—Could, for a moment, doubtlessly
 believe:
 "So is myself withdrawn into my
 depths,
 "The soul retreated from the perished
 brain
 "Whence it was wont to feel and
 use the world
 "Through these dull members, done
 with long ago.
 "Yet I myself remain: I feel myself:
 "And there is nothing lost. Let be
 awhile!"

[This is the doctrine he was wont to
 teach.
 How divers persons witness in each
 man,
 Three souls which make up one soul:
 first, to wit,
 A soul of each and all the bodily
 parts,
 Seated therein, which works, and is
 what Does.
 And has the use of earth, and ends
 the man
 Downward: but, tending upward for
 advice,
 Grows into, and again is grown into
 By the next soul, which, seated in
 the brain,
 Useth the first with its collected use,
 And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—is
 what Knows:
 Which, duly tending upward in its
 turn,
 Grows into, and again is grown into
 By the last soul, that uses both the
 first,
 Subsisting whether they assist or no,
 And, constituting man's self, is what
 Is—
 And leans upon the former, makes it
 play.
 As that played off the first: and,
 tending up,
 Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends
 the man

- Upward in that dread point of inter-
course,
Nor needs a place, for it returns to
Him.
What Does, what Knows, what Is :
three souls, one man
I give the glossa of Theotypas.]
- And then, "A stick, once fire from
end to end :
"Now, ashes save the tip that holds
a spark !
"Yet, blow the spark, it runs back,
spreads itself
"A little where the fire was : thus I
urge
"The soul that served me, till it task
once more
"What ashes of my brain have kept
their shape,
"And these make effort on the last o'
the flesh,
"Trying to taste again the truth of
things—"
(He smiled)---"their very superficial
truth ;
"As that ye are my sons, that it is long
"Since James and Peter had release
by death,
"And I am only he, your brother
John,
"Who saw and heard, and could re-
member all.
"Remember all ! It is not much to
say.
"What if the truth broke on me from
above
"As once and oft-times ? Such might
hap again :
"Doubtlessly He might stand in
presence here.
"With head wool-white, eyes flame,
and feet like brass,
"The sword and the seven stars, as
I have seen -
"I who now shudder only and surmise
"How did your brother bear that
sight and live ?"
"If I live yet, it is for good, more love
"Through me to men : be nought
but ashes here
- "That keep awhile my semblance,
who was John.
"Still, when they scatter, there is
left on earth
"No one alive who knew (consider
this !)
"Saw with his eyes and handled
with his hands
"That which was from the first, the
Word of Life,
"How will it be when none more
saith 'I saw' ?
"Such ever was love's way : to rise,
it stoops.
"Since I, whom Christ's mouth
taught, was bidden teach,
"I went, for many years, about the
world,
"Saying, 'It was so ; so I heard and
saw,'
"Speaking as the case asked : and
men believed.
"Afterward came the message to
myself
"In Patmos isle : I was not bidden
teach,
"But simply listen, take a book and
write,
"Nor set down other than the given
word,
"With nothing left to my arbitra-
ment
"To choose or change : I wrote, and
men believed
"Then, for my time grew brief, no
message more,
"No call to write again, I found a
way,
"And, reasoning from my knowledge,
merely taught
"Men should, for love's sake, in
love's strength believe ;
"Or I would pen a letter to a friend
"And urge the same as friend, nor
less nor more :
"Friends said I reasoned rightly, and
believed.
"But at the last, why, I seemed left
alive
"Like a sea-jelly weak on Patmos
strand.

- "To tell dry sea-beach gazers how I
fared
"When there was mid-sea, and the
mighty things ;
"Left to repeat, 'I saw, I heard, I
knew,'
"And go all over the old ground
again,
"With Antichrist already in the
world.
"And many Antichrists, who an-
swered prompt
"Am I not Jasper as thyself art
John?
"Nay, young, whereas through age
thou mayest forget :
"Wherefore, explain, or how shall
we believe?
"I never thought to call down fire
on such.
"Or, as in wonderful and early
days,
"Pick up the scorpion, tread the
serpent dumb ;
"But patient stated much of the
Lord's life
"Forgotten or misdelivered, and let
it work :
"Since much that at the first, in
deed and word,
"Lay simply and sufficiently ex-
posed,
"Had grown (or else my soul was
grown to match,
"Fed through such years, familiar
with such light,
"Guarded and guided still to see
and speak)
"Of new significance and fresh
result ;
"What first were guessed as points,
I now knew stars,
And named them in the Gospel I
have writ.
"For men said, 'It is getting long
ago :
"Where is the promise of His
coming?'—asked
"These young ones in their strength,
as loth to wait,
"Of me who, when their sires were
born, was old.
- "I, for I loved them, answered, joy-
fully,
"Since I was there, and helpful in
my age ;
"And, in the main, I think such men
believed.
"Finally, thus endeavouring, I fell
sick,
"Ye brought me here, and I up-
posed the end,
"And went to sleep with one thought
that, at least,
"Though the whole earth should lie
in wickedness,
"We had the truth, might leave the
rest to God,
"Yet now I wake in such decrepitude
"As I had slidden down and fallen
afar,
"Past even the presence of my former
self,
"Grasping the while for stay at facts
which snap,
"Till I am found away from my own
world,
"Feeling for foot-hold through a
blank profound,
"Along with unborn people in strange
lands,
"Who say—I hear said or conceive
they say—
"Was John at all, and did he say
he saw?
"Assure us, ere we ask what he
might see !
"And how shall I assure them? Can
they share
"They, who have flesh, a veil of
youth and strength
"About each spirit, that needs must
bide its time,
"Living and learning still as years
assist
"Which wear the thickness thin, and
let man see—
"With me who hardly am withheld
at all,
"But shudderingly, scarce a shred
between,
"Lie bare to the universal prick of
light?

- "Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,
 "We whom God loves? When pain ends, gain ends too.
 "To me, that story—ay, that Life and Death
 "Of which I wrote 'it was'—to me, it is;
 "—Is, here and now: I apprehend nought else
 "Is not God now i' the world His power first made?
 "Is not His love at issue still with sin,
 "Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?
 "Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around?
 "Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise
 "To the right hand of the throne—what is it beside,
 "When such truth, breaking bounds, o'ersloods my soul,
 "And, as I saw the sin and death, even so
 "See I the need yet transiency of both,
 "The good and glory consummated thence?
 "I saw the power; I see the Love, once weak,
 "Resume the Power: and in this word 'I see,'
 "Lo, there is recognized the Spirit of both
 "That moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds
 His eye and bids him look. These are, I see;
 "But ye, the children, His beloved ones too.
 "Ye need, as I should use an optic glass
 "I wondered at erewhile, somewhere i' the world,
 It had been given a crafty smith to make;
 "A tube, he turned on objects brought too close,
 "Lying confusedly inordinate
 "For the unassisted eye to master once:
 "Look through his tube, at distance now they lay,
 "Become succinct, distinct, so small, so clear!
 "Just thus, ye needs must apprehend what truth
 "I see, reduced to plain historic fact,
 "Diminished into clearness, proved a point
 "And far away: ye would withdraw your sense
 "From out eternity, strain it upon time,
 "Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death.
 "Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,
 "As though a star should open out, all sides.
 "Grow the world on you, as it is my world.
 "For life, with all it yields of joy and woe.
 "And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—
 "Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love.
 "How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
 "And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
 "Such prize despite the envy of the world.
 "And, having gained truth, keep truth: that is all.
 "But see the double way wherein we are led,
 "How the soul learns diversely from the flesh!
 "With flesh, that hath so little time to stay,
 "And yields mere basement for the soul's emprise.
 "Expect prompt teaching. Helpful was the light,
 "And warmth was cherishing and food was choice
 "To every man's flesh, thousand years ago.
 "As now to yours and mine; the body sprang

- "At once to the height, and stayed :
 but the soul.—no !
 "Since sages who, this noontide,
 meditate
 "In Rome or Athens, may descry
 some point
 "Of the eternal power, hid yestereve ;
 "And, as thereby the power's whole
 mass extends,
 "So much extends the æther floating
 o'er.
 "The love that tops the might, the
 Christ in God.
 "Then, as new lessons shall be learned
 in these
 "Till earth's work stop and useless
 time run out,
 "So duly, daily, needs provision be
 'For keeping the soul's prowess pos-
 sible.
 "Building new barriers as the old
 decay,
 "Saving us from evasion of life's
 proof,
 "Putting the question ever, 'Does
 God love,
 "'And will ye hold that truth against
 the world ?'
 "Ye know there needs no second
 proof with good
 "Gained for our flesh from any
 earthly source :
 "We might go freezing, ages,—give
 us fire,
 "Thereafter we judge fire at its full
 worth,
 "And guard it safe through every
 chance, ye know !
 "That fable of Prometheus and his
 theft,
 "How mortals gained Jove's fiery
 flower, grows old
 "(I have been used to hear the
 pagans own)
 "And out of mind ; but fire, howe'er
 its birth,
 "Here is it, precious to the sophist
 now
 "Who laughs the myth of Æschylus
 to scorn.
 "As precious to those satyrs of his
 play,
 "Who touched it in gay wonder at
 the thing.
 "While were it so with the soul,
 this gift of truth
 "Once grasped, were this our soul's
 gain safe, and sure
 "To prosper as the body's gain is
 wont,
 "Why, man's probation would con-
 clude, his earth
 "Crumble ; for he both reasons and
 decides,
 "Weighs first, then chooses : will he
 give up fire
 "For gold or purple once he knows
 its worth ?
 "Could he give Christ up were His
 worth as plain ?
 "Therefore, I say, to test man, the
 proofs shift,
 "Nor may he grasp that fact like
 other fact,
 "And straightway in his life acknow-
 ledge it,
 "As, say, the indubitable bliss of
 fire.
 "Sigh ye, 'It had been easier once
 than now' ?
 "To give you answer I am left
 alive ;
 "Look at me who was present from
 the first !
 "Ye know what things I saw ; then
 came a test,
 "My first, befitting me who so had
 seen :
 "'Forsake the Christ thou sawest
 transfigured, Ilim
 "'Who trod the sea and brought the
 dead to life ?
 "'What should wring this from thee !'
 ye laugh and ask.
 "What wrung it ? Even a torchlight
 and a noise,
 "The sudden Roman faces, violent
 hands,
 "And fear of what the Jews might
 do ! Just that,
 "And it is written, 'I forsook and
 fled :'
 "There was my trial, and it ended
 thus.

- " Ay, but my soul had gained its truth, could grow :
 " Another year or two,—what little child,
 " What tender woman that had seen no least
 " Of all my sights, but barely heard them told,
 " Who did not clasp the cross with a light laugh,
 " Or wrap the burning robe round, thanking God ?
 " Well, was truth safe for ever, then ? Not so.
 " Already had begun the silent work
 " Whereby truth, deadened of its absolute blaze,
 " Might need love's eye to pierce the o'erstretched doubt.
 " Teachers were busy, whispering ' All is true
 " As the aged ones report ; but youth can reach
 " Where age gropes dimly, weak with stir and strain,
 " And the full doctrine slumbers till to-day.'
 " Thus, what the Roman's lowered spear was found,
 " A bar to me who touched and handled truth,
 " Now proved the glozing of some new shrewd tongue,
 " This Ebion, this Cerinthus or their mates,
 " Till imminent was the outcry ' Save our Christ !'
 " Whereon I stated much of the Lord's life
 " Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work.
 " Such work done, as it will be, what comes next ?
 " What do I hear say, or conceive men say,
 " Was John at all, and did he say he saw ?
 " Assure us, ere we ask what he might see !
 " Is this indeed a burthen for late days,
 " And may I help to bear it with you all,
 " Using my weakness which becomes your strength ?
 " For if a babe were born inside this grot,
 " Grew to a boy here, heard us praise the sun,
 " Yet had but yon sole glimmer in light's place,—
 " One loving him and wishful he should learn,
 " Would much rejoice himself was blinded first
 " Month by month here, so made to understand
 " How eyes, born darkling, apprehend amiss :
 " I think I could explain to such a child
 " There was more glow outside than gleams he caught,
 " Ay, nor need urge ' I saw it, so believe !'
 " It is a heavy burthen you shall bear
 " In latter days, new lands, or old grown strange,
 " Left without me, which must be very soon.
 " What is the doubt, my brothers ? Quick with it !
 " I see you stand conversing, each new face.
 " Either in fields, of yellow summer eves,
 " On islets yet unnamed amid the sea ;
 " Or pace for shelter 'neath a portico
 " Out of the crowd in some enormous town
 " Where now the larks sing in a solitude :
 " Or muse upon blank heaps of stone and sand
 " Idly conjectured to be Ephesus :
 " And no one asks his fellow any more
 " Where is the promise of His coming ?' but
 " Was he revealed in any of His lives,
 " As Power, as Love, as Influencing Soul ?'

- "Quick, for time presses, tell the whole mind out.
 "And let us ask and answer and be saved!
 "My book speaks on, because it cannot pass:
 "One listens quietly, nor scoffs but pleads
 "Here is a tale of things done ages since:
 "What truth was ever told the second day?
 "Wonders, that would prove doctrine, go for nought.
 "Remains the doctrine, love; well, we must love,
 "And what we love most, power and love in one,
 "Let us acknowledge on the record here,
 "Accepting these in Christ: must Christ then be?
 "Has He been? Did not we ourselves make Him?
 "Our mind receives but what it holds, no more.
 "First of the love, then; we acknowledge Christ—
 "A proof we comprehend His love, a proof
 "We had such love already in ourselves,
 "Knew first what else we should not recognize.
 "'Tis mere projection from man's inmost mind,
 "And, what he loves, thus falls reflected back,
 "Becomes accounted somewhat out of him;
 "He throws it up in air, it drops down earth's,
 "With shape, name, story added, man's old way.
 "How prove you Christ came otherwise at least?
 "Next try the power: He made and rules the world:
 "Certes there is a world once made, now ruled,
 "Unless things have been ever as we see.
 "Our sires declared a charoteer's yoked steeds
 "Brought the sun up the east and down the west,
 "Which only of itself now rises, sets,
 "As if a hand impelled it and a will,—
 "Thus they long thought, they who had will and hands:
 "But the new question's whisper is distinct,
 "Wherefore must all force needs be like ourselves?
 "We have the hands, the will; what made and drives
 "The sun is force, is law, is named, not known,
 "While will and love we do know; marks of these,
 "Eye-witnesses attest, so books declare—
 "As that, to punish or reward our race,
 "The sun at undue times arose or set
 "Or else stood still: what do not men affirm?
 "But earth requires as urgently reward
 "Or punishment to-day as years ago,
 "And none expects the sun will interpose:
 "Therefore 't was mere passion and mistake,
 "Or erring zeal for right, which changed the truth.
 "Go back, far, farther, to the birth of things;
 "Ever the will, the intelligence, the love,
 "Man's!—which he gives, supposing he but finds,
 "As late he gave head, body, hands and feet.
 "To help these in what forms he called his gods.
 "First, Jove's brow, Juno's eyes were swept away.
 "But Jove's wrath, Juno's pride continued long;

" "As last, will, power, and love discarded these,

" "So law in turn discards power, love, and will.

" "What proveth God is otherwise at least?

" "All else, projection from the mind of man!"

" Nay, do not give me wine, for I am strong,

" But place my gospel where I put my hands.

" I say that man was made to grow, not stop;

" That help, he needed once, and needs no more,

" Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:

" For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.

" This imports solely, man should mount on each

" New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,

" The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,

" Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.

" Man apprehends Him newly at each stage

" Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done;

" And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.

" You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs

" To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn.

" And check the careless step would spoil their birth;

" But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go.

" Since should ye doubt of virtues, question kinds,

" It is no longer for old twigs ye look,

" Which proved once underneath lay store of seed.

" But to the herb's self, by what light ye boast,

" For what fruit's signs are. This book's fruit is plain.

" Nor miracles need prove it any more.

" Doth the fruit show? Then miracles bade 'ware

" At first of root and stem, saved both till now

" From trampling ox, rough boar and wanton goat.

" What? Was man made a wheel-work to wind up.

" And be discharged, and straight wound up anew?

" No!—grown, his growth lasts; taught, he ne'er forgets:

" May learn a thousand things, not twice the same.

" This might be pagan teaching: now hear mine.

" I say, that as the babe, you feed awhile.

" Becomes a boy and fit to feed himself,

" So, minds at first must be spoon-fed with truth:

" When they can eat, babe's-nurture is withdrawn.

" I fed the babe whether it would or no:

" I bid the boy or feed himself or starve.

" I cried once, 'That ye may believe in Christ.

" Behold this blind man shall receive his sight!'

" I cry now, 'Urgest thou, *for I am shrewd*

" *And smile at stories how John's word could cure—*

" *Repeat that miracle and take my faith!'*

" I say, that miracle was duly wrought

" When, save for it, no faith was possible.

" Whether a change were wrought it the shows o' the world.

" Whether the change came from our minds which see

- Of shows o' the world so much as
and no more
Than God wills for His purpose,
(what do I
" See now, suppose you, there where
you see rock
Round us ?)—I know not ; such was
the effect,
So faith grew, making void more
miracles
Because too much : they would
compel, not help.
I say, the acknowledgment of God
in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for
thee
All questions in the earth and out
of it.
And has so far advanced thee to be
wise.
Wouldst thou unprove this to re-
prove the proved ?
In life's mere minute, with power
to use that proof.
Leave knowledge and revert to how
it sprung ?
Thou hast it ; use it and forthwith,
or die !
For I say, this is death and the sole
death.
When a man's loss comes to him
from his gain.
Darkness from light, from know-
ledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made
manifest ;
A lamp's death when, replete with
oil, it chokes ;
A stomach's when, surcharged with
food, it starves,
With ignorance was surety of a cure.
When man, appalled at nature,
questioned first
What if there lurk a might behind
this might ?
He needed satisfaction God could
give.
And did give, as ye have the
written word :
But when he finds might still re-
double might,
- Yet asks, ' Since all is might, what
use of will ?'
—Will, the one source of might.—
he being man
With a man's will and a man's might,
to teach
In little how the two combine in
large,—
That man has turned round on him-
self and stands,
Which in the course of nature is, to
die.
And when man questioned, ' What
if there be love
Behind the will and might, as real
as they ?'—
He needed satisfaction God could
give,
And did give, as ye have the written
word :
But when, beholding that love every-
where,
He reasons, ' Since such love is
everywhere,
And since ourselves can love and
would be loved,
We ourselves make the love, and
Christ was not,'—
How shall ye help this man who
knows himself,
That he must love and would be
loved again,
Yet, owning his own love that proveth
Christ,
Rejecteth Christ through very need
of Him ?
The lamp o'erswims with oil, the
stomach flags
Loaded with nurture, and that man's
soul dies.
If he rejoin, ' But this was all the
while
A trick ; the fault was, first of all,
in thee,
Thy story of the places, names
and dates,
Where, when and how the ulti-
mate truth had rise,
—Thy prior truth, at last dis-
covered none,

- " Whence now the second suffers
 detriment.
 " What good of giving knowledge
 if, because
 " O' the manner of the gift, its profit
 fail?
 " And why refuse what modicum of
 help
 " Had stopped the after-doubt, im-
 possible
 " I' the face of truth -- truth absolute,
 uniform?
 " Why must I hit of this and miss
 of that,
 " Distinguish just as I be weak or
 strong,
 " And not ask of thee and have
 answer prompt,
 " Was this once, was it not once? --
 then and now
 " And evermore, plain truth from
 man to man.
 " Is John's procedure just the
 heathen bard's?
 " Put question of his famous play
 again
 " How for the ephemerals' sake Jove's
 fire was filched,
 " And carried in a cane and brought
 to earth:
 " *The fact is in the fable, cry the*
wise,
 " *Mortals obtained the boon, so much*
is fact,
 " *Though fire be spirit and produced*
on earth.
 " As with the Titan's, so now with
 thy tale:
 " Why breed in us perplexity, mis-
 take,
 " Nor tell the whole truth in the
 proper words?
 " I answer, Have ye yet to argue out
 " The very primal thesis, plainest
 law,
 " -- Man is not God but hath God's
 end to serve,
 " A master to obey, a course to
 take,
 " Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to
 become?
 " Grant this, then man must pass
 from old to new,
 " From vain to real, from mistake to
 fact.
 " From what once seemed good, to
 what now proves best.
 " How could man have progression
 otherwise?
 " Before the point was mooted 'What
 is God?'
 " No savage man inquired 'What
 am myself?'
 " Much less replied, 'First, last, and
 best of things.'
 " Man takes that title now if he
 believes
 " Might can exist with neither will
 nor love,
 " In God's case--what he names now
 Nature's Law--
 " While in himself he recognizes
 love
 " No less than might and will: and
 rightly takes.
 " Since if man prove the sole existent
 thing
 " Where these combine, whatever
 their degree,
 " However weak the might or will or
 love,
 " So they be found there, put in
 evidence,--
 " He is as surely higher in the
 scale
 " Than any might with neither love
 nor will.
 " As life, apparent in the poorest
 midge,
 " (When the faint dust-speck flits, ye
 guess its wing)
 " Is marvellous beyond dead Atlas'
 self--
 " Given to the nobler midge for
 resting-place!
 " Thus, man proves best and highest
 --God, in fine.
 " And thus the victory leads but to
 defeat,
 " The gain to loss, best rise to the
 worst fall,
 " His life becomes impossible, which
 is death.

- " But if, appealing thence, he cower,
avouch
- " He is mere man, and in humility
- " Neither may know God nor mis-
take himself;
- " I point to the immediate conse-
quence
- " And say, by such confession straight
he falls
- " Into man's place, a thing nor God
nor beast.
- " Made to know that he can know
and not more;
- " Lower than God who knows all
and can all.
- " Higher than beasts which know
and can so far
- " As each beast's limit, perfect to an
end,
- " Nor conscious that they know, nor
craving more;
- " While man knows partly but con-
ceives beside,
- " Creeps ever on from fancies to the
fact,
- " And in this striving, this converting
air
- " Into a solid he may grasp and use,
- " Finds progress, man's distinctive
mark alone,
- " Not God's, and not the beasts':
God is, they are,
- " Man partly is and wholly hopes to
be.
- " Such progress could no more attend
his soul
- " Were all it struggles after found at
first
- " And guesses changed to knowledge
absolute,
- " Than motion wait his body, were
all else
- " Than it the solid earth on every
side,
- " Where now through space he moves
from rest to rest.
- " Man, therefore, thus conditioned,
must expect
- " He could not, what he knows now,
know at first;
- " What he considers that he knows
to-day,
- " Come but to-morrow, he will find
misknown:
- " Getting increase of knowledge, since
he learns
- " Because he lives, which is to be a
man,
- " Set to instruct himself by his past
self:
- " First, like the brute, obliged by
facts to learn.
- " Next, as man may, obliged by his
own mind.
- " Bent, habit, nature, knowledge
turned to law.
- " God's gift was that man should
conceive of truth
- " And yearn to gain it, catching at
mistake.
- " As midway help till he reach fact
indeed.
- " The statuary ere he mould a shape
- " Boasts a like gift, the shape's idea,
and next
- " The aspiration to produce the same;
- " So, taking clay, he calls his shape
thereout.
- " Cries ever 'Now I have the thing
I see':
- " Yet all the while goes changing
what was wrought,
- " From falsehood like the truth, to
truth itself.
- " How were it had he cried 'I see
no face,
- " 'No breast, no feet i' the ineffec-
tual clay'?
- " Rather commend him that he
clapped his hands,
- " And laughed 'It is my shape and
lives again!'
- " Enjoyed the falsehood, touched it
on to truth.
- " Until yourselves applaud the flesh
indeed
- " In what is still flesh-imitating
clay.
- " Right in you, right in him, such
way be man's!
- " God only makes the live shape at a
jet.
- " Will ye renounce this pact of
creatureship?

"The pattern on the Mount subsists
no more.

"Seemed awhile, then returned to
nothingness ;

"But copies, Moses strove to make
thereby,

"Serve still and are replaced as time
requires :

"By these, make newest vessels,
reach the type !

"If ye demur, this judgment on
your head,

"Never to reach the ultimate, angels'
law.

"Indulging every instinct of the soul

"There where law, life, joy, impulse
are one thing !

"Such is the burthen of the latest
time.

"I have survived to hear it with my
ears,

"Answer it with my lips : does this
suffice ?

"For if there be a further woe than
such.

"Wherein my brothers struggling
need a hand.

"So long as any pulse is left in mine,

"May I be absent even longer yet,

"Plucking the blind ones back from
the abyss.

"Though I should tarry a new hun-
dred years !"

But he was dead : 'twas about noon,
the day

Somewhat declining : we five buried
him

That eve, and then, dividing, went
five ways,

And I, disguised, returned to Ephesus.

By this, the cave's mouth must be
filled with sand.

Valens is lost. I know not of his
trace ;

The Bactrian was but a wild childish
man.

And could not write nor speak, but
only loved :

So, lest the memory of this go quite,

Seeing that I to-morrow fight the
beast ;

I tell the same to Phœbas, whom
believe !

For many look again to find that
face.

Beloved John's to whom I ministered,
Somewhere in life about the world ;

they err :

Either mistaking what was darkly
spoke

At ending of his book, as he relates,
Or misconceiving somewhat of this
speech

Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I
suppose.

Believe ye will not see him any more
About the world with his divine
regard !

For all was as I say, and now the
man

Lies as he lay once, breast to breast
with God.

[Cerinthus read and mused ; one
added this :

"If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of
men

"Mere man, the first and best but
nothing more, -

"Account Him, for reward of what
He was,

"Now and for ever, wretchedest of all.

"For see ; Himself conceived of life
as love.

"Conceived of love as what must
enter in,

"Fill up, make one with His each
soul He loved :

"Thus much for man's joy, all men's
joy for Him.

"Well, He is gone, thou sayest, to
fit reward

"But by this time are many souls
set free,

"And very many still retained alive :

"Nay, should His coming be delayed
awhile.

"Say, ten years longer (twelve years,
some compute)

"See if, for every finger of thy hands,
 "There be not found, that day the
 world shall end.
 "Hundreds of souls, each holding by
 Christ's word
 "That He will grow incorporate with
 all.
 "With me as Pamphylax, with him
 as John,
 "Groom for each bride! Can a
 mere man do this?
 "Yet Christ saith, this He lived and
 died to do.
 "Call Christ, then, the illimitable
 God.
 "Or lost!"

But 'twas Cerinthus that is lost!

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS :
 OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY
 IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was alto-
 gether such a one as thyself."

[WILL sprawl, now that the heat of
 day is best,
 Flat on his belly in the pit's much
 mire,
 With elbows wide, fists clenched to
 prop his chin.
 And, while he kicks both feet in the
 cool slush.
 And feels about his spine small eft
 things course,
 Run in and out each arm, and make
 him laugh :
 And while above his head a pompion-
 plant,
 Coating the cave-top as a brow its
 eye,
 Creeps down to touch and tickle hair
 and beard,
 And now a flower drops with a bee
 inside,
 And now a fruit to snap at, catch
 and crunch,—
 He looks out o'er yon sea which
 sunbeams cross

And recross till they weave a spider-
 web
 (Meshes of fire, some great fish break
 at times)
 And talks to his own self, how'er
 he please,
 Touching that other, whom his dam
 called God.
 Because to talk about Him, vexes
 —ha.
 Could He but know! and time to
 vex is now,
 When talk is safer than in winter-
 time.
 Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
 In confidence he drudges at their
 task,
 And it is good to cheat the pair, and
 gibe,
 Letting the rank tongue blossom into
 speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
 'Thinketh. He dwelleth i' the cold o'
 the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun
 to match.
 But not the stars: the stars came
 otherwise:
 Only made cleuds, winds, meteors,
 such as that:
 Also this 'sle, what lives and grows
 thereon,
 And snaky sea which rounds and ends
 the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at
 ease:
 He hated that He cannot change
 His cold,
 Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an
 icy fish
 That longed to 'scape the rock-stream
 where she lived.
 And thaw herself within the luke-
 warm brine
 O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far
 amid,
 A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls
 of wave;

Only, she ever sickened, found re-
 pulse
 At the other kind of water, not her
 life,
 (Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred
 o' the sun)
 Flounced back from bliss she was not
 born to breathe,
 And in her old bounds buried her
 despair,
 Hating and loving warmth alike: so
 He.

 Thinketh, He made thereat the sun,
 this isle,
 Trees and the fowls here, beast and
 creeping thing
 Von otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as
 a leech;
 Von auk, one fire-eye in a ball of
 foam.
 That floats and feeds: a certain
 badger brown
 He hath watched hunt with that
 slant white-wedge eye
 By moonlight; and the pie with the
 long tongue
 That pricks deep into oakwarts for a
 worm,
 And says a plain word when she
 finds her prize.
 But will not eat the ants; the ants
 themselves
 That build a wall of seeds and settled
 stalks
 About their hole—He made all these
 and more.
 Made all we see, and us, in spite:
 how else?
 He could not, Himself, make a
 second self
 To be His mate: as well have made
 Himself:
 He would not make what he mis-likes
 or slights,
 An eyesore to Him, or not worth
 His pains:
 But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
 Make what Himself would fain, in a
 manner, be
 Weaker in most points, stronger in a
 few.

 Worthy, and yet more playthings all
 the while,
 Things He admires and mocks too,
 that is it.
 Because, so brave, so better though
 they be,
 It nothing kills if He begin to
 plague
 Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into
 mash,
 Add honeycomb and pods, I have
 perceived,
 Which bite like finches when they
 bill and kiss.—
 Then, when froth rises bladdery,
 drink up all,
 Quick, quick, till maggots scamper
 through my brain;
 Last, throw me on my back i' the
 seeded thyme.
 And wanton, wishing I were born
 a bird,
 Put case, unable to be what I wish,
 I yet could make a live bird out of
 clay:
 Would not I take clay, pinch my
 Caliban
 Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath
 wings,
 And great comb like the hoopoe's to
 admire.
 And there, a sting to do his foes
 offence.
 There and I will that he begin to live,
 Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the
 horns
 Of grigs high up that make the merry
 din.
 Saucy through their veined wings,
 and mind me not.
 In which feat, if his leg snapped,
 brittle clay.
 And he lay stupid-like.—why, I
 should laugh;
 And if he, spying me, should fall
 to weep,
 Beseech me to be good, repair his
 wrong,
 Bid his poor leg smart less or grow
 again,—
 Well, as the chance were, this might
 take or else

Not take my fancy : I might hear his
cry,
And give the mankin three sound
legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him
like an egg,
And lessoned he was nine and merely
clay.
Were this no pleasure, lying in the
thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain be-
come alive,
Making and marring clay at will?
So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor
wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel : He is strong
and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder
crabs
That march now from the mountain
to the sea ;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the
twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing
so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts
purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted
off ;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive
a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers
end in red ;
As it likes me each time. I do :
so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i'
the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were
guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork,
be sure !
Oh, He hath made things worthier
than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such
things do more
Than He who made them ! What
consoles but this ?
That they, unless through Him, do
nought at all.

And must submit : what other use in
things ?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-
joint
That, blown through, gives exact the
scream o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the
feathers blue :
Sound this, and little birds that hate
the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad
their foe is hurt :
Put case such pipe could prattle and
boast forsooth
'I catch the birds, I am the crafty
thing,
'I make the cry my maker cannot
make
'With his great round mouth ; he
must blow through mine !'
Would not I smash it with my foot ?
So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and
ill at ease ?
Aha, that is a question ! Ask, for
that,
What knows, the something over
Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be,
found and fought,
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing,
perchance.
There may be something quiet o'er
His head.
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy
nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in
some way.
I joy because the quails come ; would
not joy
Could I bring quails here when I
have a mind :
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to,
doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its
couch,
But never spends much thought nor
care that way.
It may look up, work up, the worse
for those
It works on ! 'Careth but for Setebos

The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
 Who, making Himself feared through
 what He does,
 Looks up, first, and perceives he
 cannot soar
 To what is quiet and hath happy life;
 Next looks down here, and out of
 very spite
 Makes this a bauble-world to ape
 yon real,
 These good things to match those
 as hips do grapes;
 'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and
 sport.
 Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at
 his books
 Careless and lofty, lord now of the
 isle;
 Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad
 leaves, arrow-shaped.
 Wrote thereon, he knows what, pro-
 digious words;
 Has peeled a wand and called it by
 a name;
 Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's
 robe
 The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
 And hath an ounce sleeker than
 youngling mole,
 A four-legged serpent he makes cower
 and couch.
 Now snarl, now hold its breath and
 mind his eye,
 And saith she is Miranda and my
 wife:
 'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill
 crane
 He bids go wade for fish and straight
 disgorge;
 Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he
 snared,
 Blinded the eyes of, and brought
 somewhat tame,
 And split its toe-webs, and now pens
 the drudge
 In a hole o' the rock and calls him
 Caliban:
 A bitter heart that bides its time and
 bites.
 Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
 Taketh his mirth with make-believes:
 so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made
 all thing
 Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds
 not so.
 Who made them weak, meant weak-
 ness He might vex.
 Had He meant other, while His
 hand was in,
 Why not make horny eyes no thorn
 could prick.
 Or plate my scalp with bone against
 the snow.
 Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint
 and joint,
 Like an orc's armour? Ay, - so
 spoil His sport!
 He is the One now: only He doth all.
 'Saith, He may like, perchance, what
 profits Him.
 Ay, him-self loves what does him
 good; but why?
 'Gets good no otherwise. This
 blinded beast
 Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his
 nose.
 But, had he eyes, would want no
 help, but hate
 Or love, just as it liked him: He
 hath eyes.
 Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
 Use all His hands, and exercise much
 craft,
 By no means for the love of what
 is worked.
 'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the
 world
 When all goes right, in this safe
 summer-time,
 And he wants little, hungers, aches
 not much.
 Than trying what to do with wit and
 strength.
 'Falls to make something: 'piled yon
 pile of turfs,
 And squared and stuck there squares
 of soft white chalk,
 And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a
 moon on each,
 And set up endwise certain spikes of
 tree,
 And crowned the whole with a sloth's
 skull a-top,

Found dead i' the woods, too hard
for one to kill

No use at all i' the work, for work's
deceit :

'Shall some day knock it down again:
so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats
in proof!

One Hurricane will spoil six good
months' hope.

He hath a spite against me, that I
know.

Just as He favours Prosper, who
I rows why?

So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced
them firm

With store and stake to stop the
tortoises

Crawling to lay their eggs here:
well, one wave,

Feeling the foot of Him upon its
neck.

Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its
large tongue,

And licked the whole labour flat: so
much for spite.

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder
it lies)

Where, half an hour before, I slept i'
the shade:

Often they scatter sparkles: there is
force!

'Dug up a newt He may have envied
once

And turned to stone, shut up inside a
stone.

Please Him and hinder this?—What
Prosper does?

Aha, if He would tell me how! Not
He!

There is the sport: discover how or
die!

All need not die, for of the things o'
the isle

Some flee afar, some dive, some run
up trees:

Those at His mercy,—why, they
please Him most

When . . . when . . . well, never try
the same way twice!

Repeat what not has pleased He may
grow wroth

You must not know His ways, and
play Him off.

Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like
himself?

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fear:
But steals the nut from underneath
my thumb,

And when I threat, bites stoutly in
defence

'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
for night at my approach: the two
ways please.

But what would move my choler more
than this,

That either creature counted on it
to live

To-morrow and next day and all days
to come.

Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its
heart,

"Because he did so yesterday with
me,

"And otherwise with such another
brute,

"So must he do henceforth and
always." Ay?

Would teach the reasoning couple
what "must" means!

'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord?
So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue
thus,

And we shall have to live in fear of
Him

So long as He lives, keeps His strength:
no change,

If He have done His best, made to
new world

To please Him more, so leave off
watching this,

If He surprise not even the Quiet's
self

Some strange day, or, suppose, grow
into it

As grubs grow butterflies: else, here
are we,

And there is He, and nowhere help
at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall
stop.

His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted
friends

Idly! He doth His worst in this our
life.

Giving just respite lest we die through
pain.

Saving last pain for worst, - with
which, an end.

Meanwhile, the best way to escape
His ire

Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees,
himself.

Yonder two flies, with purple films
and pink,

Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills
both.

'Sees two black painful beetles roll
their ball

On head and tail as if to save their
lives:

Moves them the stick away they strive
to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him miscon-
ceive, suppose

This Caliban strives hard and ails no
less.

And always, above all else, envies
Him:

Wherefore he mainly dances on dark
nights,

Moans in the sun, gets under holes to
laugh,

And never speaks his mind save
housed as now:

Outside, 'groans, curses. If He
caught me here,

O'erheard this speech, and asked
"What chucklest at?"

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger
off,

Or of my three kid yearlings burn the
best.

Or let the toothsome apples rot on
tree,

Or push my tame beast for the orc to
taste:

While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it. "What I hate, be consecrate

"To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no
mate

"For Thee; what see for envy in poor
me?"

Hoping the while, since evils some-
times mend.

Warts rub away and sores are cured
with slime.

That some strange day, will either the
Quiet catch

And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the
world at once!

Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or,
yes.

There scuds His raven that has told
Him all!

It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha!
The wind

Shoulders the pillared dust, death's
house o' the move.

And fast invading fires begin! White
blaze

A tree's head snaps - and there, there,
there, there, there.

His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at
Him!

Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
Maketh his teeth meet through his
upper lip.

Will let those quails fly, will not eat
this month

One little mess of whelks, so he may
'scape!

CONFESSIONS

I

WHAT is he buzzing in my ears?

"Now that I come to die.

"Do I view the world as a vale of
tears?"

Ah, reverend sir, not I!

II

What I viewed there once, what I
view again

Where the physic bottles st:

On the table's edge,—is a suburb
lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

III

That lane sloped, much as the bottles
do,
From a house you could descend
O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain
blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

IV

To mine, it serves for the old June
weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled
"Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all

V

At a terrace, somewhere near the
stopper,
There watched for me, one time,
A girl: I know, so, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of time.

VI

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The
Lodge."

VII

What right had a lounge up their
lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their
eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

VIII

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled
"Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair.

IX

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate.
Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet
How sad and bad and mad it was
But then, how it was sweet!

MAY AND DEATH

I

I wonder that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with
you
Three parts of spring's delightful
things;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part
too

II

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of
friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the worm
Meantime and the long even-
end

III

So, for their sake, be May still May!
Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I had
Sweet sights and sounds throng
manifold.

IV

Only, one little sight, one plant.
Woods have in May, that starts up
green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leave
between,—

V

That, they might spare: a certain
wood
Might miss the plant: their loss
were small:
But I, where'er the leaf grew there,
Its drop comes from my heart,
that's all.

DEAF AND DUMB

A GROUP BY WOOLNER

ONLY the prism's obstruction shows
aright
The secret of a sunbeam breaks its
light
Into the jewelled bow from blankest
white;

So may a glory from defect arise:
Only by Deafness may the vexed
Love weak

Its insuppressive sense on brow and
cheek,

Only by Dumbness adequately speak
As favoured mouth could never,
through the eyes.

PROSPICE

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my
throat.

The mist in my face.
When the snows begin, and the blasts
denote

I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the
storm.

The post of the foe:
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a
visible form.

Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit
attained.

And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the
guerdon be gained.

The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—once fight
more.

The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my
eyes and forbore,

And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare-
like my peers

The heroes of old,

Bear the front in a minute pay and
life's arrears.

Of pain, of darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to
the brave.

The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiercest
voices that rave.

Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a
peace out of pain.

Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp
thee again.

And with God be the rest!

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS

A PICTURE BY LEIGHTON

BUT give them me, the mouth, the
eyes, the brow!

Let them once more absorb me! One
look now

Will lap me round for ever, not to
pass

Out of its light, though darkness lie
beyond:

Held me safe again within the
bond

Of one immortal look! All woe
that was.

Forgotten, and all terror that may be,
Defied,—no past is mine, no future:
look at me!

YOUTH AND ART

I

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together.

You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

II

Your trade was with stick and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted and
polished.

Then laughed "They will see some

"Smith made, and Gibson demolished."

III

My business was song, song, song ;

I chirped, che-pel, trilled and twittered.

"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long.

"And Grisi's existence embittered!"

IV

I earned no more by a warble

Then you by a sketch in plaster ;

You wanted a piece of marble,

I needed a music master.

V

We studied hard in our styles,

Chipped each at a crust like
Hindoos.

For air looked out on the tiles,

For fun watched each other's windows.

VI

You lounged, like a boy of the South,

Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of
beard too ;

Or you got it, rubbing your mouth

With fling, as the clay adhered to.

VII

And I soon managed to find

Weak points in the flower-fence
facing.

Was forced to put up a blind

And be safe in my corset-lacing.

VIII

No harm ! It was not my fault

If you never turned your eye's tail
up

As I shook upon *F. in alt.*

Or ran the chromatic scale up :

IX

For spring bade the sparrows pair,

And the boys and girls gave graceless

And stalls in our street looked rare

With bulrush and watercresses

X

Why did not you pinch a flower

In a pellet of clay and fling it ?

Why did not I put a power

Of thanks in a look, or sing it ?

XI

I did look, sharp as a lynx.

(And yet the memory rankles)

When models arrived, some nix

Tripped up-stairs, she and her
ankles.

XII

But I think I gave you as good !

"That foreign fellow,—who can
know

"How she pays, in a playful mood,

"For his tuning her that piano?"

XIII

Could you say so, and never say

"Suppose we join hands and
for tunes,

"And I fetch her from over the way.

"Her, piano, and long tunes and
short tunes?"

XIV

No, no : you would not be rash.

Nor I rasher and something over :

You've to settle yet Gilson's hash,

And Grisi yet lives in clover.

XV

But you meet the Prince at the Board,

I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*.

I've married a rich old lord,

And you're dubbed knight and an
R.A.

Each life unfulfilled, you see:

It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
I have not sighed deep, laughed free.

Starved, feasted, despaired, -- been
happy.

XVII

And nobody calls you a dunce.

As if people spoke me clever:
That could but have happened once.
And we missed it, lost it for ever.

A FACE

If one could have that little head of
hers

Painted upon a background of pale
gold,

Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the
mateless mould

Of those two lips, which should be
opening soft

In the pure profile: not as when
she laughs.

For that spoils all: but rather as if
aloft

Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned
its stat's

Burthen of honey-coloured buds to
kiss

And capture 'twixt the lips apart for
this

Then her lithe neck, three fingers
might surround.

How it should waver on the pale
gold ground

Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin
it lifts!

I know, Correggio loves to mass, in
rifts

Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades
absorb:

But these are only massed there, I
should think.

Waiting to see some wonder mo-
mently

Grow out, stand full, fade slow
against the sky

That's the pale ground you'd see
this sweet face fly.

All heaven, meanwhile, condensed
into one eye

Which fears to lose the wonder
should it wink.

A LIKENESS

SOME people hang portraits up

In a room where they dine or sup:

And the wife dines tea-time
quieter,

And her cousin, he stirs his cup.

Asks, "Who was the lady, I
wonder?"

"'Tis a daisy John bought at a sale."

Quoth the wife, -- looks black as
thunder:

"What a shade beneath her nose!"

"Snuff-taking, I suppose."

Adds the cousin, while John's corn-
all.

Or else, there's no wife in the case.

But the portrait's queen of the place.

Alone amid the other spoils

Of youth, -- mas', gloves and tails,

And pipe-sticks, rose, cherry-tree,
jasmine,

And the long whip, the tandem-
lasher.

And the cast from a fist ("not, alas!
mine,

"But my master's, the Tipton
Slasher").

And the cards where pistol balls mark
ace.

And a satin shoe used for cigar-cases.

And the chamouis horns ("shot in the
Chablais")

And paints -- Rarey drumming on
Cruiser.

And Sayers, our champion, the
bruiser.

And the little edition of Rabelais:

Where a friend, with both hands in
his pockets,

May saunter up close to examine it,

And remark a good deal of Jane
Lamb in it,
"But the eyes are half out of their
sockets:
"That hair's not so bad, where the
gloss is.
"But they've made the girl's nose a
proboscis:
Love Lamb that we danced with at
Vichy!
"What, is not she Jane? Then, who
is she?"

All that I own is a print.
An etching, a nezzoth;
'Tis a study, a fancy, a fiction,
Yet a fact (take my conviction)
Because it has more than a hint
Of a certain face, I never
Saw elsewhere touch or trace of
In women I've seen the face of:
Just an etching and, so far, clever.

I keep my prints, an imbroglio,
Fifty in one portfolio.
When some *only* tries my claret,
We turn round chairs to the fire,
Chirp over days in a garret
Chuckling over increase of salary,
Taste the good nuis of our leisure,
Talk about pencil and lyre,
And the National Portrait Gallery:
Then I shudd' my nerve,
After we've turned over twenty,
And the debt of wonder my crony
Owes

Is paid to my Marc Antonios.¹
He stops me—" *Festina lente!* "
"What's that sweet thing there, the
etching?"

How my waistcoat-strings want
stretching,

How my cheeks grow red as
tomatoes

How my heart leaps! But hearts,
after leaps, ache.

"By the by, you must take, for a
keepsake,

"That other, you praised, of Vol-
pato's."¹

¹ Engravers, held in repute by collectors.

The fool! would he try a flight further
and say

He never saw, never before to-day,
What was able to take his breath
away,

A face to lose youth for, to occupy
age

With the dream of, meet death with,
why, I'll not engage

But that, half in a rapture and half in
a rage,

I should toss him the thing, self—

"'Tis only a duplicate."

"A thing of no value! Take it, I
supplicate!"

MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM"

Now, don't, sir! Don't expose me!
Just this once!

This was the first and only time, I'll
swear.

Look at me,—see, I kneel,—the only
time.

I swear, I ever cheated,—yes, by the
soul

Of Her who bears—(your sainted
mother, sir!)

All, except this last accident, was
truth—

This little kind of dip!—and even
this.

It was your own wine, sir, the good
champagne,

(I took it for Catawba, you're so kind)
Which put the folly in my head!

"Get up?"

You still inflict on me that terrible
face?

You show no mercy?—Not for Her
dear sake.

The sainted spirit's, whose soft breath
even now

Blows on my cheek—(don't you feel
something, sir?

You'll tell?

Go tell, then! Who the devil cares
What such a rowdy chooses to . . .

Alas!—de!
 Please, if you can, let this be through;
 my own paper, sir!
 Can I do!

Well, sir, I hope you've done it now!
 Oh Lord!! I little thought, sir,
 yesterday,
 When your departed mother spoke
 those words
 Of peace through me, and moved you,
 sir, so much,
 You gave me—(very kind it was of
 you)
 These shirt-studs—(better take them
 I tell you,
 Please, sir)—yes, little did I think
 soon
 A trifle of trick, all through a glass too
 much
 Of his own champagne, would change
 my best of friends
 Into an angry gentleman!

Though, 'twas wrong
 I don't contest the point; your anger's
 just:
 Whatever put such folly in my head,
 I know 'twas wicked of me. There's
 a thief,
 Dusk undeveloped spirit (I've ob-
 served)
 Owes me a grudge—a negro's, I
 should say,
 Or else an Irish emigrant's; yourself
 Explained the case so well last Sun-
 day, sir,
 When we had summoned Franklin to
 clear up
 A point about those shares if the
 telegraph:
 Ay, and he swore . . . or might it be
 Tom Paine? . . .
 Thumping the table close by where I
 crouched,
 He'd do me soon a mischief: that
 come true!
 Why, now your face clears! I was
 sure it would!
 Then, this one time . . . don't take
 your hand away.

Through yours I surely kiss your
 mother's hand . . .
 You'll promise to forgive me?—or, at
 least,
 Tell nobody of this? Consider, sir!
 What harm can mercy do? Would
 but the shade
 Of the venerable dead—one just vouch-
 safe
 A rap or tip! What bit of paper's
 here?
 Suppose we take a pencil, let her
 write.
 Make the least sign, she urges on her
 child
 Forgiveness? There now! I do! Oh!
 'Twas your foot,
 And not a natural creak, sir?

Answer, then!
 Once, twice, thrice . . . see, I'm
 waiting to say "thrice!"
 All to no use? No sort of hope for
 me?
 It's all to post to Greeley's news-
 paper?
 What? If I told you all about the
 tricks?
 Upon my soul!—the whole truth, and
 nought else,
 And how there's been some falsehood
 for your part.
 Will you engage to pay my passage
 out,
 And hold your tongue until I'm safe
 on board?
 England's the place, not Boston—no
 offence!
 I see what makes you hesitate: don't
 fear!
 I mean to change my trade and cheat
 no more.
 Yes, this time really it's upon my
 soul!
 Be my salvation!—under Heaven, of
 course.
 I'll tell some queer things. Sixty
 Vs must do.
 A trifle, though, to start with! We'll
 refer
 The question to this table?

How you're changed—
Then split the difference; thirty
more, we'll say
Ay, but you leave my presents!
Else I'll swear
'Twas all through those: you wanted
yours again.
So, picked a quarrel with me, to get
them back!
Tread on a worm, it turns, sir! I
I turn,
Your fault! 'Tis you'll have forced
me! Who's obliged
To give up life yet try no self-
defence?
At all events, I'll run the risk. Eh?

Done!

May I sit, sir? This dear old table,
now!
Please, sir, a parting egg-nogg and
cigar!
I've been so happy with you! Nice
stained chairs,
And sympathetic sideboards; what
an end
To all the instructive evenings! (It's
alright)
Well, nothing lasts, as Bacon came
and said.
Here goes,—but keep your temper,
or I'll scream!

Fol-lol-the-rido-liddle-idle-ol!
You see, sir, it's your own fault more
than mine:
It's all your fault, you curious gentle-
folk!
You're prigs,—excuse me,—like to
look so spry.
So clever, while you cling by half a
claw
To the perch whereon you puff your-
selves at roost,
Such piece of self-conceit as serves
for perch
Because you chose it, so it must be
safe.
Oh, otherwise you're sharp enough!
You spy
Who slips, who slides, who holds by
help of wing,

Wanting real foothold,—who can't
keep upright
On the other perch, your neighbour
chose, not you:
There's no outwitting you respecting
him!
For instance, men love money—that,
you know
And what men do to gain it: well,
suppose
A poor lad, say a help's son in your
house,
Listening at keyholes, hears the com-
pany
Talk grand of dollars, V-notes, and
so forth,
How hard they are to get, how good
to hold,
How much they buy,—if, suddenly,
in pops he—
"I've got a V-note!" what do you
say to him?
What's your first word which follows
your last kick?
"Where did you steal it, rascal?"
That's because
He finds you, fain would fool you,
off your perch,
Not on the special piece of nonsense,
sir,
Elected your parade-ground: let him
try
Lies to the end of the list,—“He
picked it up,
“His cousin died and left it him
by will,
“The President flung it to him,
riding by,
“An actress trucked it for a curl
of his hair,
“He dreamed of luck and found his
shoe enriched,
“He dug up clay, and out of clay
made gold”—
How would you treat such possi-
bilities?
Would not you, prompt, investigate
the case
With cow-hide? “Lies, lies, lies,”
you'd shout: and why?
Which of the stories might not prove
mere truth?

- This last, perhaps, that clay was
turned to coin!
- Let's see, now, give him me to speak
for him!
- How many of your rare philosophers,
In plaguy books I've had to dip into,
Believed gold could be made thus,
And made it? Oh, with such philo-
sophers
- You're on your best behaviour!
While the lad—
With him, in a trice, you settle
likelihoods.
- Nor doubt a moment how he got his
prize—
In his case, your hear, judge and
eye—
- All in a breath: so would most men
of use.
- But let the same lad hear you talk
as grand
- At the same keyhole, you and com-
pany.
- Of signs and wonders, the invisible
world;
- How wisdom scouts our vulgar un-
belief
- More than our vulgarest credulity;
How good men have desired to see a
ghost.
- What Johnson used to say, what
Wesley bid,
- Mother Goose thought, and fiddle-
diddle-dee;
- If he break in with, "Sir, I saw a
ghost!"
- Ah, the ways change! He finds you
perched and perit
- It's a conceit of yours that ghosts
may be:
- There's no talk now of cow-hide.
"Till it out!
- "Don't fear us! Take your time
and recollect!
- "Sit down first: try a glass of wine,
my boy!
- "And David, (is not that your
Christian name?)
- "Of all things, should this happen
twice—it may—
- "Be sure, while fresh in mind, you
let us know!"
- Does the boy blunder, blurt out this,
blab that.
- Break down in the other, as los-
ginners will?
- All's endeavour, all's considerateness
"No haste!
- "Pause and collect yourself! We
understand!
- "That's the bad memory, or the
natural shock.
- "Or the unexplained *phenomena*!"
- Egad.
- The boy takes heart of grace: finds,
never fear.
- The readiest way to ope your own
heart wide,
- Show—what I call your peacock-
perch, pet post
- To strut, and spread the tail, and
squawk upon!
- "Just as you thought, much as you
might expect!
- "There be more things in heaven
and earth, Horatio."
- And so on. Shall not David take
the hint.
- Grow bolder, stroke you down at
quickened rate?
- If he ruffle a feather, it's "Gently,
patiently!
- "Manifestations are so weak at first!
- "Doubting, moreover, kills them.
cuts all short.
- "Cures with a vengeance!"
- There, sir, that's your style!
- You and your boy—such pains be-
stowed on him.
- Or any headpiece of the average
worth.
- To teach, say, Greek, would perfect
him apace,
- Make him a Person ("Porson?"
thank you, sir!)
- Much more, proficient in the art of
lies.
- You never leave the lesson! Fire
alight.

Catch you permitting it to die!
You've friends;

There's no withholding knowledge
least men, tho'

Apt to look elsewhere for their souls'
supply:

Why should not you parade your
lawful prize?

Who finds a picture, digs a medal up,
Hits on a first edition,—he henceforth
Gives it his name, grows notable: how
much more.

Who hurls out a "medium"?
"David's" yours.

"You highly-favoured man? Then,
pity souls

"Less privileged! Allow us share
your luck!"

So, David holds the circle, rules the
roast.

Narrates the vision, peeps in the glass
ball,

Sets to the spirit-writing, hears the
raps,

As the case may be.

Now mark! To be precise—
Though I say, "lies" all these, at this
first stage,

'Tis just for science' sake: I call such
grubs

By the name of what they'll turn to,
dragonflies.

Strictly, it's what good people style
untruth:

But yet, so far, not quite the full-grown
thing:

It's fancying, fable-making, nonsense-
work

What never meant to be so very
bad—

The knack of story-telling, brighten-
ing up

Each dull old bit of fact that drops its
shine.

One does see somewhat when one
shuts one's eyes,

If only spots and streaks; tables do tip
In the oddest way of themselves: and

pens, good Lord,
Who knows if you drive them or they
drive you?

'Tis but a foot in the water and out
you;

Not that duck-under which decides
your dive.

Note this, for it's important: listen
why.

I'll prove, you push on David till he
dives

And ends the shivering Here's your
circle, now:

Two-thirds of them, with heads like
you their host.

Turn up their eyes, and cry, as you
expect.

"Lord, who'd have thought it!"
But there's always one

Looks wise, compassionately smiles,
submits

"Of your veracity no kind of doubt,

"But—do you feel so certain of that
boy's?

"Really, I wonder! I confess myself

"More chary of my faith!" That's
galling, sir!

What, he the investigator, he the sage,

When all's done? Then, you just
have shut your eyes,

Opened your mouth, and gulped down
David whole,

You! Terrible were such catastrophe!

So, evidence is redouble^d doubled
again,

And doubled besides: once more,

"He heard, we heard.

"You and they heard, your mother
and your wife,

"Your children and the stranger in
your gates:

"Did they or did they not?" So
much for him,

The black sheep, guest without the
wedding-garb,

The doubting Thomas! Now's your
turn to crow:

"He's kind to think you such a fool:
Sludge cheats?

"Leave you alone to take precau-
tions!"

Straight

The rest join chorus. Thomas stands
abashed,

Sips silent some such beverage as this.
 Consider if it be harder, shutting eyes
 And gulping David in good fellowship,
 Than going elsewhere, getting, in ex-
 change,

With no egg-nogg to lubricate the
 food.

Some just as tough a morsel. Over
 the way

Holds Captain Sparks his court: is
 it better there?

Have not you hunting-stories, scalp-
 ing-scenes,

And Mexican War exploits to swallow
 phlegm

If you'd be free o' the stove-side,
 rocking-chair,

And trio of amiable daughters?

David succumbs!
 Victory! All your child's yours
 again!

Out of the clubbing of submiss-ive wa-
 David's performance rounds, each
 chink gets patched.

Every protrusion of a point's filed
 into,

All's fit to set a-rolling round the
 world.

And then return to David finally.
 Lies seven-feet thick about his first
 half-inch.

Here's a choice birth o' the super-
 natural.

Poor David's pledged to! You've
 employed no tool

That laws exclaim at, save the devil's
 own.

Yet screwed him into henceforth
 killing you

To the top of your tent--all out of
 one half life!

Yet hold, if there's one half or a
 hundredth part

Of a lie, that's his fault,—his be the
 penalty!

I dare say! You'd prove firmer in
 his place?

You'd find the courage,—that first
 flurry over,

That mild bit of romancing-work at
 end,—

To interpose with "It goes," means,
 that;

"Must stop here." Sir, I saw no
 ghost at all.

"Inform your friends I made . . .
 well, fools of them.

"And found you ready more. I've
 lived in clover

"These three weeks, take it out in
 kicks of me!"

I doubt it. Ask your conscience!
 Let me know,

Twelve months hence, with how few
 embellishment,

You've told almighty Boston of this
 passage

Of arms between us, your first taste
 of the foil

From Sludge who could not fence.
 Sir! Sludge, your boy!

I lied, sir,—there! I got up from
 my gorge

On otal in the gutter, and preferred
 Your canvas-backs: I took their

carver's size,
 Measured his modicum of intelligence,

Tickled him on the cockles of his
 heart

With a raven feather, and next week
 found myself

Sweet and clean, dining daintily,
 dizen'd smart,

Set on a stool buttressed by ladies'
 knees.

Every soft smiler calling me her pet,
 Encouraging my story to uncoil

And creep out from its hole, incl.
 after inch.

"How last night, I no sooner snore
 in bed.

"Tucked up, just as they left me,
 than came raps!

"While a light whisk'd" . . .
 "Shaped somewhat like a star?"

"Well, like some sort of stars,
 ma'am."—"So we thought!

"And any voice? Not yet? Try
 hard, next time.

"If you can't hear a voice; we think
 you may:

"At least, the Pennsylvanian 'me-
 diums' did."

Oh, next time comes the voice! Will lay down spiritual laws, read
 "just as we hoped!" wrong things right
 Are not the hopes proud now, By the rule o' reverse. If Francis
 pleasant, promise Verulam
 O' the natural acknowledgment? Styles himself Bacon, spends the name
 to id:
 Of course! With a y and a k, says he drew
 "off we push, illy-oh-yo, trim the breath in York.
 to it, Gave up the ghost in Wales when
 On we sweep with a cataract ahead, Cromwell reigned
 We're midway to the Horseshoe: (As, sir, we somewhat fear he was apt
 stop, who can, to say,
 The dance of bubbles gay about our Before I found the useful book that
 prow! know-
 Experiences become worth waiting Why, what harm's done? The circle
 for, smiles apace.
 Spirits now speak up, tell them "It was not Bacon, after all, you
 most mind, see!
 And compliment the "medium" "We understand: the trick's but
 property, natural:
 Concern themselves about his Sunday "Such spirits' individuality
 coat, "Is hard to put in evidence: they
 see rings on his hand with pleasure incline
 Ask you all "To gibe and jeer, these undeveloped
 How you'd receive a course of treat's sorts.
 like these! "You see, their world's much like a
 Why, take the quietest hack and stall jail broke loose,
 him up, "While this of ours remains shut,
 Cram him with corn a month, then bolted, barred,
 out with him "With a single window to it. Sludge,
 Among his mates on a bright April our friend
 morn, "Serves as this window, whether thin
 With the turf to tread; see if you or thick,
 find or no "Or stained or stainless; he's the
 A caper in him, if he bucks or bolts! medium-pate
 Much more a youth whose tancies "Through which, to see us and be
 sprout as rank seen, they peep:
 As toadstool-clump from melon-bed. "They crowd each other, hustle for a
 'Tis soon, chance,
 "Sirrah, you spirit, come, go, fetch "Tread on their neighbour's kibes,
 and carry, play tricks enough!
 "Read, write, rap, rub-a-dub, and "Does Bacon, tired of waiting, swerve
 hang yourself!" aside?
 I'm spared all further trouble; all's "Up in his place jumps Barnum—
 arranged: 'I'm your man.
 Your circle does my business; I may "I'll answer you for Bacon!" Try
 rave once more!"
 Like an epileptic dervish in the books, Or else it's—"What's a 'medium'?"
 Foam, fling myself flat, rend my He's a means.
 clothes to shreds; "Good, bad, indifferent, still the only
 No matter: lovers, friends and means
 countrymen

- "Spirits can speak by; he may mis-
 "Stutter and stammer,—he's their
 "Take him or leave him: they must
 "Or else, put up with having know-
 "To half expression through his igno-
 "Suppose the spirit Beethoven wants
 "New music he's brimful of; why, he
 "The handle of this organ, grinds
 "And what he poured in at the
 "As a Thirty-third Sonata. (Cuey
 "Comes from the hopper as bran-new
 "The Snakers' Hymn in G, with a
 "Or the 'Stars and Stripes' set to
 "Sir, where's the scrape you did not
 "You that are wise?—And for the fools,
 "Who came to see,—the guests, (ob-
 "Pray do you find guests criticize your
 "Your furniture, your grammar, or your
 "Then, why your 'medium'?—What's
 "Prove your madeira red-ink and gam-
 "Your Sludge, a cheat—then, some-
 "For vaunting both as genuine.
 "Guests!"—Don't fear!
 "They'll make a wry face, nor too much
 "And leave you in your glory.
 "No, sometimes
 "They doubt and say as much!"
 "Ay, doubt they do!
- And what's the cause, please—
 (You triumph) "that explains the
 "Doubt posed our 'medium,' puddled
 "He gave them back their rubbish,
 "Could flour come out o' the honest
 "Applaud the faithful; cases flock in,
 "How, when a mocker willed a
 "Should name a spirit James whose
 "I once cried the 'medium,'—'twas
 "In short, a hit proves much, a miss
 "Does this convince? The letter:
 "Time for the double-shotted broad-
 "The grand means, last resource. Look
 "black and big.
 "You style us idiots, therefore—why
 "Accomplices in rascality: this we
 "In our own house, from our invited
 "Found brave enough to outrage a
 "Exposed by our good faith! Have
 "Now, then, hear us: one man's not
 "quite worth twelve.
 "You see a cheat? Here's some
 "twelve see an ass:
 "Excuse me if I calculate good day!"
 "Out slinks the scetic, all the laughs
 "explode.
 "Sludge waves his hat in triumph!
 "Oh, he don't.
 "There's something in real truth (ex-
 "plain who can!
 "One casts a wistful eye at, like the
 "horse
 "Who mopes beneath stuffed hay-racks
 "and won't munch

Because he spies a corn-bag : hang
not truth,

It spoils all dainties proffered in its
place!

I've felt at times when, cockered,
coqueted

And coaxed by the
pretty

Bidden enjoy their bullying,— never
bore,

But o'er their shoulders spit at the
flying man,—

I've felt a child ; only, a fractious child
That, dandled soft by nurse, aunt,

grandmother,

Who kept him from the kennel, sun
and wine,

Good fun and wholesome hand,
enjoyed he sweet,

And comely and superior eyes
askance

The rugged sons of the gutter at
their game,

I'm would be down with them in
the thick of the filth,

Making dirt-pies laughing free, speak-
ing plain

And calling granny the very old out
she is

I've felt a spite I lay, at you, at
them,

Huggings and huddling—gnashed my
teeth to marl

A decent dog post—It's too bad,
I say,

Ruining a soul so!

But what's "so," what's fixed,
Where may one stop? Nowhere!

The cheating's nursed
Out of the lying, softly and surely

spun
To just your length, sir! I'd stop
soon enough:

But you're for progress. "All old,
nothing new?"

"Only the usual talking through the
mouth,

"Or writing by the hand? I own, I
ought

"This would develop, grow demon-
strable,

Make doubt about it, — I —
we might see,

"Flowers we might touch. There
no one doubts you, Sludge!

"You dream the dreams, you see
the spiritual sights,

"The secrets come in your head,
beyond dispute

"Still, for the sceptics' sake, to stop
all mouths,

"We want some outward mani-
festations!—well,

"The Pennsylvanians gained such;
why not Sludge?

"He may improve with time!"

Av, that he may!
He sees his lot, there's no room,
tote,

"Tis a trifle at first. "Eh, David?
Did you hear?"

"You scurvy the table, your foot
caused the squeak,

"This time you're . . . joking, are
you not, my boy?"

"N-n-no!"—and "I'm done for,
bought and sold henceforth

The old good easy jog-trot way, the
. . . eh?

The . . . not so very false, as false-
hood goes,

The spinning out and drawing fine,
you know,

Really mere novel-writing of a sort,
Acting, or improvising, make-believe,

surely not downright cheaters, — my
bow,

'Tis done with and my lot cast;
Cheat's my name:

The fatal dash of brandy in your
tea

Has settled what you'll have the
souchong's smack:

The caddy gives way to the dram-
bottle.

Then, it's so cruel easy! Oh, those
tricks

That can't be tricks, those feats by
sleight of hand,

Clearly no common conjuror's!—no
indeed!

A conjuror? Choose me any craft in
the world

A man puts hand to; and with six
months' pains

I'll play you twenty tricks miraculous
To people untaught the trade: have
you seen glass blown,

Pipes pierced? Why, just this bis-
cuit that I chip,

Did you ever watch a baker toss on
flat

To the oven? Try and do it! Take
my word,

Practise but half as much, while
limbs are lithe.

To turn, shove, tilt a table, crack
your joints,

Manage your feet, dispose your hand-
s aright,

Work wires that twitch the curtains,
play the glove

At end o' your slipper,—then put out
the lights

And . . . there, there, all you want
you'll get, I hope!

I found it slip, easy as an old
shoe.

Now, lights on table again! I've
done my part,

You take my place while I give
thanks and rest.

"Well, Judge Humgruffin, what's
your verdict, sir?

"You, hardest head in the United
States,—

"Did you detect a cheat here?
Wait! Let's see!

"Just an experiment first, for can-
dour's sake!

"I'll try and cheat you, Judge! The
table tilts:

"Is it I that move it? Write! I'll
press your hand

"Cry when I push, or guide your
pencil, Judge!"

Sludge still triumphant! "That a
rap, indeed?

"That, the real writing? Very like
a whale!

"Then, if, sir, you—a most distin-
guished man,

"And, were the Judge not here, I'd
say, . . . no matter!

"Well, sir, if you fail, you can't take
us in,—

"There's little fear that Sludge
will!"

Won't he, ma'am?

But what if our distinguished host,
like Sludge,

Bade God bear witness that he played
no trick,

While you believed that what pro-
duced the raps

Was just a certain child who died,
you know,

And whose last breath you thought
your lips had felt?

Eh? That's a capital point, ma'am:
Sludge begins

At your entreaty with your dearest
dead,

The little voice set lisping once again.
The tiny hand made feel for yours

once more,
The poor lost image brought back,

plain as dreams,
Which image, if a word had chanced
recall.

The customary cloud would cross
your eyes,

Your heart return the old tick, pay
its pang!

A right mood for investigation, this!
One's at one's ease with Saul and

Jonathan,
Pompey and Caesar: but one's own

lost child . . .

I wonder, when you heard the first
clod drop

From the spadeful at the grave-side,
felt you free

To investigate who twitched your
funeral scarf

Or brushed your flounces? Then, it
came of course

You should be stunned and stupid;
then, (how else?)

Your breath stopped with your blood,
your brain struck work.

But now, such causes fail of such
effects,

All's changed.—the little voice begins afresh,

Yet you, calm, consequent, can test and try

And touch the truth. "Tests? Didn't the creature tell

"Its nurse's name, and say it lived six years,

"And rode a rocking-horse? Enough of tests!

"Sludge never could learn that!"

He could not, eh?

You compliment him. "Could not?" Speak for yourself!

I'd like to know the man I ever saw

Once,—never mind where, how, why, when,—once saw,

Of whom I do not keep some matter in mind

He'd swear I "could not" know, sagacious soul!

What? Do you live in this world's blow of blacks,

Palaver, gossipry, a single hour

Nor find one smut has settled on your nose,

Of a smut's worth, no more, no less? —one fact

Out of the drift of facts, whereby you learn

What someone was, somewhere, some-when, somewhy?

You don't tell folk—"See what has stuck to me!

"Judge Humgruffin, our most distinguished man.

"Your uncle was a tailor, and your wife

"Thought to have married Miggs, missed him, hit you!"—

Do you, sir, though you see him twice a-week?

"No," you reply, "what use re-tailing it?

"Why should I?" But, you see, one day you *should*,

Because one day there's much use,—when this fact

Brings you the Judge upon both gouty knees

Before the supernatural; proves that Sludge

Knows, as you say, a thing he "could not" know:

Will not Sludge thenceforth keep an outstretched face

The way the wind drives?

"Could not!" Look you now, I'll tell you a story! There's a whiskered chap,

A foreigner, that teaches music here And gets his bread,—knowing no better way:

He says, the fellow who informed of him

And made him fly his country and fall West

Was a hunchback cobbler, sat, stitched soles and sang,

In some outlandish place, the city Rome,

In a cellar by their Broadway, all day long;

Never asked questions, stopped to listen or look,

Nor lifted nose from lapstone: let the world

Roll round his three-legged stool, and news run in

The ears he hardly seemed to keep pricked up.

Well, that man went on Sundays, touched his pay,

And took his praise from government, you see;

For something like two dollars every week,

He'd engage tell you some one little thing

Of some one man, which led to many more,

(Because one truth leads right to the world's end)

And make you that man's master—when he dined

And on what dish, where walked to keep his health

And to what street. His trade was, throwing thus

His sense out, like an ant-eater's long tongue,

Soft, innocent, warm, moist, in-
passible.
And when 'twas crusted o'er with
creatures—slick.
Their juice enriched his palate.
"Could not Sludge!"

I'll go yet a step further, and maintain.
Once the imposture plunged its proper
depth

I' the rotten of your natures, all of
you,

(If one's not mad nor drunk, and
hardly then)

It's impossible to cheat—that's, be
found out!

Go tell your brotherhood this first
slip of mine,

All to-day's tale, how you detected
Sludge,

Behaved unpleasantly, till he was fain
confess,

And so has come to grief! You'll
find I think,

Why Sludge still snaps his fingers in
your face.

There now, you've told them! What's
their prompt reply?

"Sir, did that youth confess he had
cheated me.

"I'd disbelieve him. He may cheat
at times;

"That's in the 'medium'-nature,
thus they're made,

"Vain and vindictive, cowards, prone
to scratch.

"And so all cats are; still, a cat's
the beast

"You coax the strange electric sparks
from out,

• By rubbing back its fur; not so
a dog,

"Nor lion, nor lamb: 'tis the cat's
nature, sir!

"Why not the dog's? Ask God,
who made them beasts!

"Dye think the sound, the nicely-
balanced man

"(Like me"—aside)—"like you
yourself,"—(aloud)

"—He's stuff to make a 'medium'?
Bless your soul,

" 'Tis these hysteric, hybrid half-and-
halfs,

" Equivocal, worthless vermin yield
the fire!

" We take such as we find them, 'ware
their tricks,

" Wanting their service. Sir, Sludge
took in you

" How, I can't say, not being there to
watch:

" He was tried, was tempted by your
asiness,

" He did not take in me!"

Thank you for Sludge!

I'm to be grateful to such patrons, eh,
When what you hear's my best word?

"Tis a challenge

" Snap at all strangers, half-tamed
prairie-dog,

" So you cower duly at your keeper's
beck!

" Cat, show what claws were made
for, muffling them

" Only to me! Cheat others if you
can,

" Me, if you dare!" And, my wise
sir, I dared

Did cheat you first, made you cheat
others next,

And had the help o' your vaunted
manliness

To bully the incredulous. You used
me?

Have not I used you, taken full re-
venge,

Persuaded folk they knew not their
own name,

And straight they'd own the error!
Who was the fool

When, to an awe-struck wide-eyed
open-mouthed

Circle of sages, Sludge would intro-
duce

Milton composing baby-rhymes, and
Locke

Reasoning in gibberish, Homer writ-
ing Greek

In noughts and crosses. Asaph setting
psalms

To crotchet and quaver? I've made
a spirit squeak

In sham voice for a minute, then out-
 broke
 Bold in my own, defying the im-
 beciles—
 Have copied some ghost's pothooks,
 half a page,
 Then ended with my own scrawl un-
 disguised.
 "All right! The ghost was merely
 using Sludge,
 "Suiting itself from his imperfect
 stock!"
 Don't talk of gratitude to me! For
 what?
 For being treated as a showman's
 ape.
 Encouraged to be wicked and make
 sport.
 Fret or sulk, grin or whimper, any
 mood
 So long as the ape be in it and no
 man—
 Because a nut pays every mood alike.
 Curse your superior, superintending
 sort.
 Who, since you hate smoke, send un-
 boys that climb
 To cure your chimney, bid a "me-
 dium" lie
 To sweep you truth down! Curse
 your women too,
 Your insolent wives and daughters,
 that fire up
 Or faint away if a male hand squeeze
 theirs
 Yet, to encourage Sludge, may play
 with Sludge
 As only a "medium," only the kind
 of thing
 They must humour, fondle . . . oh,
 to misconceive
 Were too preposterous! But I've
 paid them out!
 They've had their wish—called for
 the naked truth.
 And in she tripped, sat down and
 bade them stare:
 They had to blush a little and forgive!
 "The fact is, children talk so; in
 next world
 "All our conventions are reversed,
 perhaps
 "Made light of: something like old
 prints, my dear!
 "The Judge has one, he brought
 from Italy.
 "A metropolis in the background,—
 o'er a bridge,
 "A team of trotting roadsters,—
 cheerful groups
 "Of wayside travellers, peasants at
 their work,
 "And, full in front, quite uncon-
 cerned, why not?
 "Three nymphs conversing with a
 cavalier,
 "And never a rag among them:
 'fine,' folk cry—
 "And heavenly manners seem not
 much unlike!
 "Let Sludge go on; we'll fancy it's
 in print!"
 If such as came for wool, sir, went
 home shorn,
 Where is the wrong I did them?
 'Twas their choice;
 They tried the adventure, ran the
 risk, tossed it up
 And lost, as some one's sure to do in
 games;
 They fancied I was made to lose,—
 smoked glass
 Useful to spy the sun through, spare
 their eyes:
 And had I proved a red-hot iron
 plate
 They thought to pierce, and, for their
 pains, grew blind,
 Whose were the fault but theirs?
 While, as things go,
 Their loss amounts to gain, the more's
 the shame!
 They've had their peep into the
 spirit-world,
 And all this world may know it!
 They've fed fat
 Their self-conceit which else had
 starved: what chance
 Save this, of cackling o'er a golden
 egg
 And compassing distinction from the
 flock.
 Friends of a feather? Well, they paid
 for it,

And not prodigiously; the price o'
 the play,
 Not counting certain pleasant inter-
 ludes,
 Was scarce a vulgar play's worth.
 When you buy
 The actor's talent, do you dare
 propose
 For his soul beside? Whereas my
 soul you buy!
 Sludge acts Macbeth, obliged to be
 Macbeth,
 Or you'll not hear his first word!
 Just go through
 That slight formality, swear himself's
 the Thane,
 And thenceforth he may strut and fret
 his hour.
 Spout, spawl, or spin his target, no
 one cares!
 Why hadn't I leave to play tricks,
 Sludge as Sludge?
 Enough of it all! I've wiped out
 scores with you—
 Vented your fustian, let myself be
 streaked!
 Like tom-fool with your ochre and
 carmine,
 Worn patchwork your respectable
 fingers sewed
 To metamorphose somebody.—yes.
 I've earned
 My wages, swallowed down my bread
 of shame,
 And shake the crumbs off—where
 but in your face?

 As for religion—why, I served it,
 sir!
 I'll stick to that! With my *phenomena*
 I laid the atheist sprawling on his
 back.
 Propped up Saint Paul, or, at least,
 Swedenborg!
 In fact, it's just the proper way to
 baulk
 These troublesome fellows—liars, one
 and all,
 Are not these sceptics? Well, to
 baffle them.
 No use in being squeamish: lie
 yourself!

 Erect your buttress just as wide o'
 the line,
 Your side, as they build up the wall
 on theirs;
 Where both meet, midway in a point,
 is truth
 High overhead: so, take your room,
 pile bricks,
 Lie! Oh, there's titillation in all
 shame!
 What snow may lose in white, snow
 gains in rose!
 Miss Stokes turns—Rahab, - nor a
 bad exchange!
 Glory be on her, for the good she
 wrought.
 Breeding belief anew 'neath ribs of
 death,
 Browbeating now the unabashed
 before,
 Ridding us of their whole life's
 gathered straws
 By a live coal from the altar! Why,
 of old.
 Great men spent years and years in
 writing books
 To prove we've souls, and hardly
 proved it then:
 Miss Stokes with her live coal, for
 you and me!
 Surely, to this good issue, all wa-
 fair—
 Not only fondling Sludge, but, even
 suppose
 He let escape some spice of knavery,
 --well,
 In wisely being blind to it! Don't
 you praise
 Nelson for setting spy-glass to blind eye
 And saying . . . what was it—that
 he could not see
 The signal he was bothered with?
 Ay, indeed!

 I'll go beyond: there's a real love of
 a lie,
 Liars find ready-made for lies they
 make.
 As hand for glove, or tongue for
 sugar-plum.
 At best, 'tis never pure and full
 belief:

Those furthest in the quagmire,
 don't suppose
 They strayed there with no warning,
 got no chance
 Of a filth-speck in their face, which
 they clenched teeth,
 Bent brow against! Be sure they had
 their doubts,
 And fears, and fairest challenges to try
 The floor o' the seeming solid sand!
 But no!
 Their faith was pledged, acquaintance
 too apprised,
 All but the last step ventured, ker-
 chiefs waved,
 And Sludge called "pet": 'twas easier
 marching on
 To the promised land; join those who,
 Thursday next,
 Meant to meet Shakespeare; better
 follow Sludge
 Prudent, oh sure! on the alert, how
 else?—
 But making for the mid-bog, all the
 same!
 To hear your outcries, one would think
 I caught
 Miss Stokes by the scruff o' the neck,
 and pitched her flat,
 Foolish-face-foremost! Hear these
 simpletons,
 That's all I beg, before my work's
 begun,
 Before I've touched them with my
 finger-tip!
 Thus they await me (do but listen,
 now!
 It's reasoning, this is,—I can't imitate
 The baby voice, though) "In so many
 tales
 "Must be some truth, truth though a
 pin-point big,
 "Yet, some: a single man's deceived
 perhaps—
 "Hardly, a thousand: to suppose
 one cheat
 "Can gull all these, were more
 miraculous far
 "Than aught we should confess a
 miracle"—
 And so on. Then the Judge sums
 up—(it's rare)

Bids you respect the authorities that
 leap
 To the judgment-seat at once, why
 don't you note
 The limpid nature, the unblemished
 life,
 The spotless honour, indi-putable
 sense
 Of the first upstart with his story?
 What
 Outrage a boy on whom you ne'er
 till now
 Set eyes, because he finds raps trouble
 him?
 Fools, these are: ay, and how of
 their opposites
 Who never did, at bottom of their
 hearts,
 Believe for a moment?—Men ennascu-
 late,
 Blank of belief, who played, as
 eunuchs use,
 With superstition safely, cold of
 blood,
 Who saw what made for them i' the
 mystery,
 Took their occasion, and upported
 Sludge
 As proselytes? No, thank you,
 far too shrewd!
 But promisers of fair play, en-
 couragers
 O' the claimant: who in candour
 needs must hoist
 Sludge up on Mars' Hill, get speech
 out of Sludge
 To carry off, criticize, and cant about!
 Didn't Athens treat Saint Paul so?
 —at any rate.
 It's "a new thing" philosophy
 fumbles at.
 Then there's the other picker-out of
 pearl
 From dung-heaps.—ay, your literary
 man,
 Who draws on his kid gloves to deal
 with Sludge
 Delicately and discreetly, shakes a
 dust
 O' the doctrine, flavours thence, he
 well knows how,

The narrative or the novel,—half-believes,
 All for the book's sake, and the public's stare,
 And the cash that's God's sole solid in this world!
 Look at him! Try to be too bold, too gross
 For the master! Not you! He's the man for muck;
 Shovel it forth, full-splash, he'll smooth your brow
 Into artistic richness, never fear!
 Find him the crude stuff: when you recognize
 Your lie again, you'll doff your hat to it,
 Dressed out for company! "For company,"
 I say, since there's the relish of success:
 Let all pay due respect, call the lie truth.
 Save the soft silent smirking gentleman
 Who ushered in the stranger: you must sigh
 "How melancholy, he, the only one
 "Fails to perceive the bearing of the truth
 "Himself gave birth to!" There's the triumph's smack!
 That man would choose to see the whole world roll
 I' the slime o' the slough, so he might touch the tip
 Of his brush with what I call the best of browns
 Tint ghost-tales, spirit-stories, past the power
 Of the outworn umber and bistre!
 Yet I think
 There's a more hateful form of foolery
 The social sage's, Solomon of saloons
 And philosophic diner-out, the fribble
 Who wants a doctrine for a chopping-block
 To try the edge of his faculty upon.
 Prove how much common sense he'll hack and hew
 I' the critical minute 'twixt the soup and fish!
 These were my patrons: these, and the like of them
 Who, rising in my soul now, sicken it.—
 These I have injured! Gratitude to these?
 The gratitude, forsooth, of a prostitute
 To the greenhorn and the bully—friends of hers.
 From the wag that wants the queer jokes for his club,
 To the snuff-box-decorator, honest man,
 Who just was at his wits' end where to find
 So genial a Pasiphae! All and each
 Pay, compliment, protect from the police:
 And how she hates them for their pains, like me!
 So much for my remorse at thanklessness
 Toward a deserving public!
 But, for God?
 Ay, that's a question! Well, sir, since you press—
 (How you do tease the whole thing out of me!
 I don't mean you, you know, when I say "them":
 Hate you, indeed! But that Miss Stokes, that Judge!
 Enough, enough—with sugar: thank you, sir!
 Now for it, then! Will you believe me, though?
 You've heard what I confess: I don't unsay
 A single word: I cheated when I could.
 Rapped with my toe-joints, set sham hands at work,
 Wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink,
 Rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor-match,
 And all the rest: believe that: believe this.

By the same token, though it seem
to set
The crooked straight again, unsay the
said.
Stick up what I've knocked down ;
I can't help that
It's truth ! I somehow vomit truth
to-day.
This trade of mine— I don't know,
can't be sure
But there was something in it, tricks
and all !
Really, I want to light up my own mind.
They were tricks,—true, but what
I mean to add
Is also true. First,—don't it strike
you, sir ?
Go back to the beginning,—the first
fact
We're taught is, there's a world be-
side this world,
With spirits, not mankind, for
tenantry ;
That much within that world once
sojourned here,
That all upon this world will visit
there.
And therefore that we bodily here
below.
Must have exactly such an interest
In learning what may be the ways
of the world
Above us, as the disembodied folk
Have (by all analogic likelihood)
In watching how things go in the old
home
With us, their sons, successors, and
what not.
Oh yes, with added powers probably,
Fit for the novel state,—old loves
grown pure,
Old interests understood aright,—
they watch !
Eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands
to help,
Proportionate to advancement : they're
ahead,
That's all—do what we do, but
nobler done—
Use plate, whereas we eat our meals
off delf,
(To use a figure).

Concede that, and I ask
Next what may be the mode of inter-
course
Between us men here, and those
once-men there ?
First comes the Bible's speech ; then,
history
With the supernatural element,—
you know—
All that we sucked in with our
mothers' milk.
Grew up with, got inside of us at last,
Till it's found bone of bone and flesh
of flesh.
See now, we start with the miraculous,
And know it used to be, at all events :
What's the first step we take, and
can't but take,
In arguing from the known to the
obscure ?
Why this : " What was before, may
be to-day.
" Since Samuel's ghost appeared to
Saul, of course
" My brother's spirit may appear to
me."
Go tell your teacher that ! What's
his reply ?
What brings a shade of doubt for the
first time
O'er his brow late so luminous with
faith ?
" Such things have been," says he,
" and there's no doubt
" Such things may be : but I advise
mistrust
" Of eyes, ears, stomach, and, more
than all, your brain,
" Unless it be of your great-grand-
mother.
" Whenever they propose a ghost to
you !"
The end is, there's a composition struck ;
'Tis settled, we've some way of inter-
course
Just as in Saul's time : only, different :
How, when and where, precisely,—
find it out !
I want to know, then, what's so
natural
As that a person born into this
world

And seized on by such teaching, should
 begin
 With firm expectancy and a frank look-
 out
 For his own allotment, his especial
 share
 P' the secret,—his particular ghost, in
 fine?
 I mean, a person born to look that way.
 Since natures differ: take the painter-
 sort.
 One man lives fifty years in ignorance
 Whether grass be green or red:—"No
 kind of eve
 "For colour," say you; while another
 picks
 And puts away even pebbles, when
 child,
 Because of bluish spots and pinky
 veins
 "Give him forthwith a paint-box!"
 just the same
 Was I born . . . "medium," you
 won't let me say.
 Well, seer of the supernatural
 Everywhen, everyhow and every-
 where.
 Will that do?

I and all such boys of course
 Started with the same stock of Bible-
 truth:
 Only, what in the rest you style
 their sense
 Instinct, blind reasoning but impera-
 tive.
 This, betimes taught them the old
 world had one law
 And ours another: "New world, new
 laws" cried they:
 "None but old laws seen everywhere
 at work,"
 Cried I, and by their help explained
 my life
 The Jews' way, still a working way
 to me.
 Ghosts made the noises, fairies waved
 the lights,
 Or Santa Claus slid down on New
 Year's Eve
 And stuffed with cakes the stocking
 at my bed.

Changed the worn shoes, rubbed clean
 the fingered slate
 O' the sun that came to grief the day
 before.

This could not last long: soon enough
 I found
 Who had worked wonders thus, and
 to what end:
 But did I find all easy, like my mates?
 Henceforth no supernatural any more?
 Not a whit: what projects the billiard-
 balls?
 "A cue," you answer: "Yes, a cue."
 said I;
 "But what hand, off the cushion,
 moved the cue?"
 "What unseen agency, outside the
 world,
 "Prompted its puppets to do this and
 that,
 "Put cakes and shoes and slates into
 their mind,
 "These mothers and aunts, nay even
 schoolmasters?"
 Thus high I sprang, and there have
 settled since.
 Just so I reason, in sober earnest
 still.
 About the greater godsend, what you
 call
 The serious gains and losses of my
 life.
 What do I know or care about your
 world
 Which either is or seems to be?
 This snap
 O' my fingers, sir! My care is for
 myself;
 Myself am whole and sole reality
 Inside a raree-show and a market-
 mob
 Gathered about it: that's the use of
 things.
 'Tis easy saying they serve vast pur-
 poses.
 Advantage their grand selves: be it
 true or false.
 Each thing may have two use.
 What's a star?
 A world, or a world's sun: doesn't it
 serve

As taper also, time-piece, weather-
glass,
And almanac? Are stars not set for
signs
When we should shear our sheep-
sow corn, prune trees?
The Bible says so.

Well, I add one use
To all the acknowledged uses, and
declare
If I spy Charles's Wain at twelve to-
night.

It warns me, "Go, nor lose another
day.

"And have your hair cut, Sludge!"
You laugh: and why?

Were such a sign too hard for God to
give?

No: but Sludge seems too little for
such grace:

Thank you, sir! So you think, so
does not Sludge!

When you and good men gape at
Providence.

Go into history and bid us mark
Not merely powder-plots prevented,
crowns

Kept on kings' heads by miracle
enough,

But private mercies—oh, you've told
me, sir.

Of such interpositions! How yourself
Once, missing on a memorable day
Your handkerchief—just setting out,
you know.—

You must return to fetch it, lost the
train.

And saved your precious self from
what befell

The thirty-three whom Providence
forgot.

You tell, and ask me what I think of
this?

Well, sir, I think then, since you
needs must know.

What matter had you and Boston
city to boot

Sailed skyward, like burnt onion-
peelings? Much

To you, no doubt: for me—un-
doubtedly

The cutting of my hair concerns me
more,

Because, however sad the truth may
seem,

Sludge is of all-importance to himself.
You set apart that day in every year

For special thanksgiving, were a
heathen else:

Well, I who cannot boast the like
escape,

Suppose I said "I don't thank
Providence

"For my part, owing it no gratitude?"

"Nay, but you owe as much"—you'd
tutor me,

"You, every man alive, for blessings
gained

"In every hour o' the day, could
you but know!

"I saw my crowning mercy: all
have such,

"Could they but see!" Well, sir,
Why don't they see?

"Because they won't look,—or per-
haps, they can't."

Then, sir, suppose I can, and will,
and do

Look, microscopically as is right,
Into each hour with its infinitude

Of influences at work to profit Sludge?
For that's the case: I've sharpened

up my sight
To spy a providence in the fire's
going out,

The kettle's boiling, the dime's stick-
ing fast

Despite the hole i' the pocket. Call
such facts

Fancies, too petty a work for
Providence.

And those same thanks which you
exact from me

Prove too prodigious payment: thanks
for what.

If nothing guards and guides us little
men?

No, no, sir! You must put away
your pride,

Resolve to let Sludge into partner-
ship!

I live by signs and omens: looked at
the roof

Where the pigeons settle—"If the
further bird,
"The white, takes wing first I'd
confess when thrashed;
"Not, if the blue does"—so I said
to myself
Last week, lest you should take me
by surprise:
Off flapped the white,—and I'm con-
fessing, sir!
Perhaps 'tis Providence's whim and
way
With only me, if the world: how
can you tell?
"Because unlikely!" Was it likelier,
now,
That this our one out of all worlds
beside,
The what-d'you-call-'em millions,
should be just
Precisely chosen to make Adam for,
And the rest o' the tale? Yet the
tale's true, you know:
Such undeserving clod was graced so
once;
Why not graced likewise undeserving
Sludge?
Are we merit-mongers, flaunt we
filthy rags?
All you can bring against my privilege
Is, that another way was taken with
you,—
Which I don't question. It's pure
grace, my luck:
I'm broken to the way of nods and
winks,
And need no formal summoning.
You've a help;
Holloa his name or whistle, clap your
hands
Stamp with your foot or pull the bell:
All's one,
He understands you want him, here
he comes.
Just so, I come at the knocking: you,
sir, wait
The tongue o' the bell, nor stir before
you catch
Reason's clear tingle, nature's clapper
brisk.
Or that traditional peal was wont to
cheer
Your mother's face turned heaven-
ward: short of these
There's no authentic intimation, eh?
Well, when you hear, you'll answer
them, start up
And stride into the presence, top of
too.
And there bid Sludge beforehand.
Sludge: that sprang
At noise o' the knuckle on the par-
tition-wall!
I think myself the more religious man.
Religion's all or nothing: it's no mere
smile
O' contentment, sigh of aspiration,
sir—
No quality o' the finelier-tempered
cl
Like its whiteness or its lightness;
rather, stuff
O' the very stuff, life of life, and self
of self.
I tell you, men won't notice: when
they do,
They'll understand. I notice nothing
else:
I'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze
and gape,
Nothing eludes me, everything's a hint,
Huddle and help. It's all absurd,
and yet
There's something in it all, I know:
how much?
No answer! What does that prove?
Man's still man,
Still meant for a poor blundering
piece of work
When all's done; but, if somewhat's
done, like this,
Or not done, is the case the same?
Suppose
I blunder in my guess at the true sense
O' the knuckle-summons, nine times
out of ten,
What if the tenth guess happen to be
right?
If the tenth shovel-load of powdered
quartz
Yield me the nugget? I gather,
crush, sift all,
Pass o'er the failure, pounce on the
success,

To give you a notion, now—(let who
wins, laugh!)

When first I see a man, what do I
first?

Why, count the letters which make
up his name,

And as their number chances, even
or odd.

Arrive at my conclusion, trim my
course:

Hiram H. Horsefall is your honoured
name,

And haven't I found a patron, sir, in
you?

"Shall I cheat this stranger?" I
take apple-pips,

Stick one in either canthus of my
eye,

And if the left drops first—(your left,
sir, stuck)

I'm warned, I let the trick alone this
time.

You, sir, who smile, superior to such
trash.

You judge of character by other rules:
Don't your rules sometimes fail you?

Pray, what rule

Have you judged Sludge by hitherto?

Oh, be sure,

You, everybody blunders, just as I,
In simpler things than these by far!

For see:

I knew two farmers,—one, a wiseacre
Who studied seasons, rummaged al-
manacs,

Quoted the dew-point, registered the
frost,

And then declared, for outcome of
his pains,

Next summer must be dampish: 'twas
a drought.

His neighbour prophesied such
drought would fall,

Saved hay and corn, made cent. per
cent. thereby,

And proved a sage indeed: how came
his lore?

Because one brindled heifer, late in
March,

Stiffened her tail of evenings, and
somehow

He got into his head that drought
was meant!

I don't expect all men can do as
much:

Such kissing goes by favour. You
must take

A certain turn of mind for this,
a twist

I' the flesh, as well. Be lazily alive,
Open-mouthed, like my friend the
ant-eater,

Letting all nature's loosely-guarded
notes

Settle and, sleek, be swallowed:
Think yourself

The one i' the world, the one for
whom the world

Was made, expect it tickling at your
mouth!

Then will the swarm of busy buzzing
flies,

Clouds of coincidence, break egg-
shell, thrive,

Breed, multiply, and bring you food
enough.

I can't pretend to mind your smiling
sir!

Oh, what you mean is this! Such
intimate way,

Close converse, frank exchange of
offices,

Strict sympathy of the immeasurably
great

With the infinitely small, betokened
here

By a course of signs and omens, raps
and sparks,—

How does it suit the dread traditional
text

O' the "Great and Terrible Name"?
Shall the Heaven of Heavens

Stoop to such child's play?

Please, sir, go with me

A moment, and I'll try to answer you.
The "*Magnum et terribile*" (is that
right?)

Well, full, began with this in the
early day;

And all the acts they recognized in
proof

Were thunders, lightnings, earth-
 quakes, whirlwinds, dealt
 Indisputably on men whose death
 they caused.
 There, and there only, folk saw
 Providence
 At work,—and seeing it, 'twas right
 enough
 All heads should tremble, hands
 wing hands amain,
 And knees knock hard together at
 the breath
 O' the Name's first letter; why, the
 Jews, I'm told,
 Won't write it down, no, to this very
 hour,
 Nor speak aloud: you know best if it
 be so.
 Each ague-fit of fear at end, they
 crept
 (Because somehow people once born
 must live)
 Out of the sound, sight, swing and
 sway o' the Name,
 Into a corner, the dark rest of the
 world,
 And safe space where as yet no fear
 had reached;
 'Twas there they looked about them,
 breathed again,
 And felt indeed at home, as we might
 say.
 The current o' common things, the
 daily life,
 This had their due contempt; no
 Name pursued
 Man from the mountain-top where
 fires abide,
 To his particular mouse-hole at its
 foot
 Where he ate, drank, digested, lived
 in short:
 Such was man's vulgar business, far
 too small
 To be worth thunder: "small," folk
 kept on, "small."
 With much complacency in those
 great days
 A mote of sand, you know, a blade
 of grass
 What was so despicable as mere
 grass,
 Except perhaps the life o' the worm
 or fly
 Which fed there? These were "small"
 and men were great.
 Well, sir, the old way's altered since
 what since,
 And the world wears another aspect
 now:
 Somebody turns our spyglass to
 or else
 Puts a new lens in it: grass, worms
 fly grow big:
 We find great things are made o'
 little things,
 And little things go lessening till
 last
 Comes God behind them. Talk o'
 mountains now?
 We talk of mould that heaps the
 mountain, mites
 That throng the mould, and God that
 makes the mites.
 The Name comes close behind
 stomach-cyst.
 The simplest of creations, just a sac
 That's mouth, heart, legs and belly
 at once, yet lives
 And feels, and could do neither, we
 conclude,
 If simplified still further one degree:
 The small becomes the dreadful and
 immense!
 Lightning, forsooth? No word more
 upon that!
 A tin-foil bottle, a strip of greasy
 silk,
 With a bit of wire and knob of brass,
 and there's
 Your dollar's-worth of lightning! But
 the cyst
 The life of the least of the little things?
 No, no!
 Preachers and teachers try another
 tack,
 Come near the truth this time: they
 put aside
 Thunder and lightning: "That's
 mistake," they cry,
 "Thunderbolts fall for neither fright
 nor sport,
 "But do appreciable good, like tides,

"I do you fancy I stop short at this?
Wonder if suit and service, son and
heir
Needs must expect, I dare pretend to
find?
If, looking for signs proper to such an
one,
I straight perceive them irresistible?
Concede that homage is a son's plain
right.
And, never mind the nods and raps
and wink.
'Tis the pure obvious supernatural
Steps forward, does its duty; why, of
course!
I have presentiments; my dreams
come true:
I fancy a friend stands whistling all
in white
Blithe as a boblink, and he's dead I
learn.
I take dislike to a dog my favourite
long,
And sell him; he goes mad next
week and snaps.
I guess that stranger will turn up
to-day
I have not seen these three years;
there's his knock
I wager "sixty peaches on that
tree!"
That I pick up a dollar in my walk
That your wife's brother's cousin's
name was George—
And win on all points. Oh, you
wince at this?
You'd fain distinguish between gift
and gift,
Washington's oracle and Sludge's
itch
O' the elbow when at whist he ought
to trump?
With Sludge it's too absurd?—*None,
devote the line.*
*Somewhere, but, sir, your somewhere
is not mine!*
Bless us, I'm turning poet! It's time
to end.
How you have drawn me out, sir!
All I ask
Is—am I heir or not heir? If I'm he,

Amen to it!
Well, sir, I put this question: I'm a
child?
I lose no time, but take you at your
word:
How shall I act a child's put pro-
prietor?
Your sainted mother, sir,—used you
to be
With such a thought as this a-worrying
you?
"She has it in her power to throttle me,
"Or stab or poison: she may turn
me out.
"Or lock me in, nor stop at this
to-day.
"But cut me off to-morrow from the
estate
"I look for"—(long may you enjoy
it, sir!)
"In brief she may unchild the child
I am."
You never had such crotchets? Nor
have I!
Who, frank contempt of childship from
the first,
Cannot both fear and take my ease at
once.
So, don't fear, I know what might be,
well enough.
But know too, child-like, that it will
not be.
At least in my case, mine, the son
and heir
O' the kingdom, as yourself proclaim
my style.

I do you fancy I stop short at this?
Wonder if suit and service, son and
heir
Needs must expect, I dare pretend to
find?
If, looking for signs proper to such an
one,
I straight perceive them irresistible?
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is not mine!*
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to end.
How you have drawn me out, sir!
All I ask
Is—am I heir or not heir? If I'm he,

Then, sir, remember, that same personage
 (To judge by what we read i' the newspaper)
 Requires, beside one nobleman in gold
 To carry up and down his coronet,
 Another servant, probably a duke,
 To hold egg-nogg in readiness: why want
 Attendance, sir, when helps in his father's house
 Abound, I'd like to know?

Enough of talk!
 My fault is that I tell too plain a truth.
 Why, which of those who say they disbelieve,
 Your clever people, but has dreamed his dream,
 Caught his coincidence, stumbled on his fact
 He can't explain, (he'll tell you smilingly)
 Which he's too much of a philosopher
 To count as supernatural. indeed,
 So calls a puzzle and problem, proud of it:
 Bidding you still be on your guard, you know,
 Because one fact don't make a system stand,
 Nor prove this an occasional escape
 Of spirit beneath the matter: that's the way!
 Just so wild Indians picked up, piece by piece,
 The fact in California, the fine gold
 That underlay the gravel—hoarded these,
 But never made a system stand, nor dug!
 So wise men hold out in each hollowed palm
 A handful of experience. sparkling fact
 They can't explain; and since their rest of life
 Is all explainable, what proof in this?
 Whereas I take the fact, the grain of gold.
 And fling away the dirty rest of life.

And add this grain to the grain each fool has found
 O' the million other such philosophers,—
 Till I see gold, all gold and only gold,
 Truth questionless though unexplainable,
 And the miraculous proved the commonplace!
 The other fools believed in mud, no doubt—
 Failed to know gold they saw: was that so strange?
 Are all men born to play Bach's fiddle-fugues,
 "Time" with the foil in carte, jump their own height,
 Cut the mutton with the broadsword, skate a five,
 Make the red hazard with the cue, clip nails
 While swimming, in five minutes row a mile,
 Pull themselves three feet up with the left arm,
 Do sums of fifty figures in their head,
 And so on, by the scores of instances?
 The Sludge with luck, who sees the spiritual facts
 His fellows strive and fail to see, may rank
 With these, and share the advantage.

Ay, but share
 The drawback! Think it over by yourself;
 I have not heart, sir, and the fire's gone grey.
 Defect somewhere compensates for success,
 Everyone knows that. Oh, we're equals, sir!
 The big-legged fellow has a little arm
 And a less brain, though big legs win the race:
 Do you suppose I 'scape the common lot?
 Say, I was born with flesh so sensitive,
 Soul so alert, that, practice helping both,

I guess what's going on outside the veil,
 Just as a prisoned crane feels pairing-time
 In the islands where his kind are, so
 must fall
 To capering by himself some shiny
 night,
 As if your back-yard were a plot of
 spice—
 Thus am I 'ware o' the spirit-world:
 while you,
 Blind as a beetle that way,—for
 amends,
 Why, you can double fist and floor
 me, sir!
 Ride that hot hardmouthed horrid
 horse of yours.
 Laugh while it lightens, play with the
 great dog,
 Speak your mind though it vex some
 friend to hear,
 Never brag, never bluster, never
 blush,—
 In short, you've pluck, when I'm
 coward—there!
 I know it, I can't help it,—folly or no,
 I'm paralyzed, my hand's no more a
 hand,
 Nor my head a head, in danger: you
 can smile
 And change the pipe in your cheek.
 Your gift's not mine.
 Would you swap for mine? No!
 but you'd add my gift
 To yours: I dare say! I too sigh at
 times,
 Wish I were stouter, could tell truth
 nor flinch,
 Kept cool when threatened, did not
 mind so much
 Being dressed gaily, making strangers
 stare,
 Eating nice things; when I'd amuse
 myself.
 I shut my eyes and fancy in my brain
 I'm—now the President, now Jenny
 Lind,
 Now Emerson, now the Benicia
 Boy—
 With all the civilized world a-wonder-
 ing

And worshipping. I know it's folly
 and worse;
 I feel such tricks sap, honeycomb the
 soul,
 But I can't cure myself: despond,
 despair,
 And then, hey, presto, there's a turn
 o' the wheel,
 Under comes uppermost, fate make
 full amends;
 Sludge knows and sees and hears a
 hundred things
 You all are blind to,—I've my taste
 of truth,
 Likewise my touch of falsehood,—
 vice no doubt,
 But you've your vices also: I'm
 content.
 What, sir? You won't shake hands?
 "Because I cheat!"
 "You've found me out in cheating!"
 That's enough
 To make an apostle swear! Why,
 when I cheat,
*Mean to cheat, do cheat, and am
 caught in the act.*
*Are you, or, rather, am I sure o' the
 fact?*
 (There's verse again, but I'm inspired
 somehow.)
 Well then I'm not sure! I may be,
 perhaps,
 Free as a babe from cheating: how
 it began,
 My gift,—no matter; what 'tis got to be
 In the end now, that's the question;
 answer that!
 Had I seen, perhaps, what hand was
 holding mine,
 Leading me whither, I had died of
 fright:
 So, I was made believe I led myself.
 If I should lay a six-inch plank from
 roof
 To roof, you would not cross the
 street, one step,
 Even at your mother's summons: but,
 being shrewd,
 If I paste paper on each side the
 plank
 And swear 'tis solid pavement, why,
 you'll cross

Humming a tune the while, in ignorance

Beacon Street stretches a hundred feet below :

I walked thus, took the paper-cheat for stone,

Some impulse made me set a thing o' the move

Which, started once, ran really by itself :

Beer flows thus, suck the siphon ; toss the kite,

It takes the wind and floats of its own force.

Don't let truth's lump rot stagnant for the lack

Of a timely helpful lie to leaven it !

Put a chalk-egg beneath the clucking hen,

She'll lay a real one, laudably deceived, Daily for weeks to come. I've told my lie.

And seen truth follow, marvels none of mine :

All was not cheating, sir, I'm positive ! I don't know if I move your hand sometimes

When the spontaneous writing spreads so far,

If my knee lifts the table all that height, Why the inkstand don't fall off the desk a-tilt,

Why the accordion plays a prettier waltz

Than I can pick out on the pianoforte. Why I speak so much more than I intend.

Describe so many things I never saw. I tell you, sir, in one sense, I believe Nothing at all, -that everybody can. Will, and does cheat : but in another sense

I'm ready to believe my very self - That every cheat's inspired, and every lie

Quick with a germ of truth.

You ask perhaps

Why I should condescend to trick at all

If I know a way without it ? This is why !

There's a strange secret sweet self-sacrifice

In any desecration of one's soul

To a worthy end, -isn't it Herodotus (I wish I could read Latin !) who describes

The single gift o' the land's virginity, Demanded in those old Egyptian rites, (I've but a hazy notion -help me, sir !) For one purpose in the world, one day in a life,

One hour in a day - thereafter, purity, And a veil thrown o'er the past for evermore !

Well, now, they understood a many things

Down by Nile city, or wherever it was ! I've always vowed, after the minute's lie,

And the end's gain, -truth should be mine henceforth.

This goes to the root o' the matter, sir, -this plain

Plump fact : accept it and unlock with it

The wards of many a puzzle !

Or, finally,

Why should I set so fine a gloss on things ?

What need I care ? I cheat in self-defence,

And there's my answer to a world of cheats !

Cheat ? To be sure, sir ! What's the world worth else ?

Who takes it as he finds, and thanks his stars ?

Don't it want trimming, turning, fur-bishing up

And polishing over ? Your so-styled great men,

Do they accept one truth as truth is found,

Or try their skill at tinkering ? What's your world ?

Here are you born, who are, I'll say at once,

Of the luckiest kind, whether in head and heart,

Body and soul, or all that helps them both.

Well, now, look back: what faculty
 of yours
 Came to its full, had ample justice done
 By growing when rain fell, biding its
 time,
 Solidifying growth when earth was
 dead,
 Spiring up, broadening wide, in
 seasons due?
 Never! You shot up and frost nipped
 you off,
 Settled to sleep when sunshine bade
 you sprout;
 One faculty thwarted its fellow: at
 'he end,
 All you boast is "I had proved a
 topping tree
 "In other climes"—yet this was the
 right clime
 Had you foreknown the seasons.
 Young, you've force
 Wasted like well-streams: old,—oh,
 then indeed,
 Behold a labyrinth of hydraulic pipes
 Through which you'd play off won-
 drous waterwork;
 Only, no water's left to feed their play.
 Young,—you've a hope, an aim, a
 love: it's tossed
 And crossed and lost: you struggle
 on, some spark
 Shut in your heart against the puffs
 around,
 Through cold and pain; these in due
 time subside,
 Now then for age's triumph, the
 hoarded light
 You mean to loose on the altered
 face of things,—
 Up with it on the tripod! It's extinct.
 Spend your life's remnant asking,
 which was best,
 Light smothered up that never peeped
 forth once,
 Or the cold cresset with full leave
 to shine?
 Well, accept this too,—seek the fruit
 of it
 Not in enjoyment, proved a dream
 on earth,
 But knowledge, useful for a second
 chance,

Another life, you've lost this world
 —you've gained
 Its knowledge for the next. What
 knowledge, sir,
 Except that you know nothing? Nay,
 you doubt
 Whether 'twere better have made
 you man or brute,
 If aught be true, if good and evil clash.
 No foul, no fair, no inside, no outside.
 There's your world!

Give it me! I slap it brisk
 With harlequin's pasteboard sceptre:
 what's it now?
 Changed like a rock-flat, rough with
 rusty weed,
 At first wash-overo' the returning wave!
 All the dry dead impracticable stuff
 Starts into life and light again: this
 world
 Pervaded by the influx from the next.
 I cheat, and what's the happy con-
 sequence?
 You find full justice straightway dealt
 you out,
 Each want supplied, each ignorance
 set at ease,
 Each folly fooled. No life-long labour
 now
 As the price of worse than nothing!
 No mere film
 Holding you chained in iron, as it
 seems,
 Against the outstretch of your very
 arms
 And legs i' the sunshine moralists
 forbid!
 What would you have? Just speak
 and, there, you see!
 You're supplemented, made a whole
 at last,
 Bacon advises, Shakespeare writes
 you songs,
 And Mary Queen of Scots embraces
 you.
 Thus it goes on, not quite like life
 perhaps,
 But so near, that the very difference
 piques,
 Shows that e'en better than this best
 will be—

This passing entertainment in a hut
Whose bare walls take your taste
since, one stage more,

And you arrive at the palace: all
half real.

And you, to suit it, less than real
beside.

In a dream, lethargic kind of death
in life.

That helps the interchange of natures,
flesh

Transfused by souls, and such souls!
Oh, 'tis choice!

And if at whiles the bubble, blown
too thin.

Seem nigh on bursting,—if you nearly
see

The real world through the false,—
what *do* you see?

Is the old so ruined? You find you're
in a flock

O' the youthful, earnest, passionate—
genius, beauty,

Rank and wealth also, if you care for
these:

And all depose their natural rights,
hail you.

(That's me, sir) as their mate and yoke-
fellow.

Participate in Sludgehood—nay, grow
mine.

I veritably possess them—banish doubt,
And reticence and modesty alike!

Why, here's the Golden Age, old
Paradise

Or new Eutopia! Here's true life
indeed.

And the world well won now, mine
for the first time!

And all this might be, may be, and
with good help

Of a little lying shall be: so, Sludge
lies!

Why, he's at worst your poet who
sings how Greeks

That never were, in Troy which never
was,

Did this or the other impossible great
thing!

He's Lowell—it's a world (you smile
applause),

Of his own invention—wondrous
Longfellow,

Surprising Hawthorne! Sludge does
more than they,

And acts the books they write: the
more his praise!

But why do I mount to poets? Take
plain prose

Dealers in common sense, set these
at work,

What can they do without their help-
ful lies?

Each states the law and fact and face
'o the thing

Just as he'd have them, finds what
he thinks fit.

Is blind to what missuits him, just
records

What makes his case out, quite
ignores the rest.

It's a History of the World, the
Lizard Age.

The Early Indians, the Old Country
War.

Jerome Napoleon, whatsoever you
please,

All as the author wants it. Such a
scribe

You pay and praise for putting life in
stones,

Fire into fog, making the past your
world.

There's plenty of "How did you
contrive to grasp

"The thread which led you through
this labyrinth?

"How build such solid fabric out of
air?

"How on so slight foundation found
this tale,

"Biography, narrative?" or, in other
words,

"How many lies did it require to make
The portly truth you here present

us with?"

"Oh," quoth the penman, purring at
your praise.

"'Tis fancy all: no particle of
fact:

"I was poor and threadbare when I
wrote that book

"'Bliss in the Golden City.' I, at Thebes?"

"We writers paint out of our heads, you see!"

"—Ah, the more wonderful the gift in you,

"The more . . . divineness and godlike craft!"

But I, do I present you with my piece,
It's "What, Sludge? When my
sainted mother spoke

"The verses Lady Jane Grey last
composed

"About the rosy bower in the seventh
heaven

"Where she and Queen Elizabeth
keep house.—

"You made the raps? 'Twas your
invention that?"

"Cur, slave and devil!"—eight
fingers and two thumbs
Stuck in my throat!

Well, if the marks seem gone,
'Tis because stiffish cock-tail, taken in
time.

Is better for a bruise than arnica.
There, sir! I bear no malice: 'tisin't
in me.

I know I acted wrongly: still, I've tried
What I could say in my excuse,—to
show

The devil's not all devil . . . I don't
pretend,

He's angel, much less such a gentleman
As you, sir! And I've lost you, lost
myself.

Lost all-l-l-l . . .

No—are you in earnest, sir?
O yours, sir, is an angel's part! I
know

What prejudice prompts, and what's
the common course

Men take to soothe their ruffled self-
conceit:

Only you rise superior to it all!

No, sir, it don't hurt much; it's
speaking long

That makes me choke a little: the
marks will go!

What? Twenty V-notes more, and
outfit too,

And not a word to Greeley? One
—one kiss

O' the hand that saves me! You'll
not let me speak,

I well know, and I've lost the right,
too true!

But I must say, sir, if She hears (she
does)

Your sainted . . . Well, sir,—be it so!
That's, I think,

My bed-room candle. Good-night!
Bl-l-less you, sir!

R-r-r, you brute-beast and blackguard!
Cowardly scamp!

I only wish I dared burn down the
house

And spoil your sniggering! Oh what,
you're the man?—

You're satisfied at last? You've found
out Sludge?

We'll see that presently: my turn, sir,
next!

I too can tell my story: brute,—do
you hear?—

You throttled your sainted mother,
that old hag,

In just such a fit of passion: no, it
was . . .

To get thi house of hers, and many
a note

Like these . . . I'll pocket them,
however . . . five,

Ten, fifteen . . . ay, you gave her
throat the twist,

Or else you poisoned her! Confound
the cuss!

Where was my head? I ought to
have prophesied

He'll die in a year and join her: that's
the way.

I don't know were my head is: what
had I done?

How did it all go? I said he poisoned
her,

And hoped he'd have grace given him
to repent,

Whereon he picked this quarrel,
bullied me

And called me cheat: I thrashed
him,—who could help?

He howled for mercy, prayed me on
his knees
To cut and run and save him from
disgrace :
I do so, and once off, he slanders me.
An end of him ! Begin elsewhere anew !
Boston's a hole, the herring-pond is
wide,
V-notes are something, liberty still
more.
Beside, is he the only fool in the world ?

APPARENT FAILURE

" We shall soon lose a celebrated
building."—*Paris Newspaper.*

I

No, for I'll save it ! Seven years since,
I passed through Paris, stopped a
day
To see the baptism of your Prince ;
Saw, made my bow, and went my
way :
Walking the heat and headache off,
I took the Seine-side, you surmise,
Thought of the Congress, Gortscha-
koff,
Cavour's appeal and Buol's replies,
So sauntered till—what met my eyes ?

II

Only the Doric little Morgue !
The dead-house where you show
your drowned :
Petrarch's Vacluse makes proud the
Sorgue,
Your Morgue has made the Seine
renowned.
One pays one's debt in such a case ;
I plucked up heart and entered,—
stalked,
Keeping a tolerable face
Compared with some whose cheeks
were chalked :
Let them ! No Briton's to be baulked !

III

First came the silent gazers ; next,
A screen of glass, we're thankful for ;
Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,
The three men who did most abhor

Their life in Paris yesterday,
So killed themselves : and now,
enthroned
Each on his copper couch, they lay
Fronting me, waiting to be owned.
I thought, and think, their sin's atoned.

IV

Poor men, God made, and all for that !
The reverence struck me ; o'er each
head
Religiously was hung its hat,
Each coat dripped by the owner's
bed,
Sacred from touch : each had his berth,
His bounds, his proper place of rest,
Who last night tenanted on earth
Some arch, where twelve such slept
abreast,—
Unless the plain asphalté seemed best.

V

How did it happen, my poor boy ?
You wanted to be Buonaparte
And have the Tuileries for toy,
And could not, so it broke your
heart ?
You, old one by his side, I judge,
Were, red as blood, a socialist,
A leveller ! Does the Empire grudge
You've gained what no Republic
missed ?
Be quiet, and unclench your fist !

VI

And this—why, he was red in vain,
Or black,—poor fellow that is blue !
What fancy was it turned your brain ?
Oh, women were the prize for you !
Money gets women, cards and dice
Get money, and ill-luck gets just
The copper couch and one clear nice
Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,
The right thing to extinguish lust !

VII

It's wiser being good than bad ;
It's safer being meek than fierce :
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;
That, after Last, returns the First.

Though a wide compass round be
fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove
accurst.

EPILOGUE

FIRST SPEAKER, *as David*

I

ON the first of the Feast of Feasts,
The Dedication Day,
When the Levites joined the Priests
At the Altar in robed array,
Gave signal to sound and say,—

II

When the thousands, rear and van,
Swarming with one accord
Became as a single man
(Look, gesture, thought and word)
In praising and thanking the Lord,—

III

When the singers lift up their voice,
And the trumpets made endeavour.
Sounding, "In God rejoice!"
Saying, "In Him rejoice
"Whose mercy endureth for ever!"—

IV

Then the Temple filled with a cloud,
Even the House of the Lord;
Porch bent and pillar bowed:
For the presence of the Lord,
In the glory of His cloud.
Had filled the House of the Lord.

SECOND SPEAKER, *as Renan*

Gone now! All gone across the dark
so far,
Sharpening fast, shuddering ever,
shutting still,
Dwindling into the distance, dies that
star
Which came, stood, opened once!
We gazed our fill
With upturned faces on as real a Face
That, stooping from grave music and
mild fire,
Took in our homage, made a visible
place
Through many a depth of glory, gyre
on gyre,

For the dim human tribute. Was
this true?

Could man indeed avail, mere praise
of his,

To help by rapture God's own rapture
too,

Thrill with a heart's red tinge that
pure pale bliss?

Why did it end? Who failed to
beat the breast,

And shriek, and throw the arms
protesting wide,

When a first shadow showed the star
addressed

Itself to motion, and on either side
The rims contracted as the rays re-
tired;

The music, like a fountain's sicken-
ing pulse,

Subsided on itself: awhile transpired
Some vestige of a Face no pangs
convulse,

No prayers retard; then even this
was gone,

Lost in the night at last. We,
lone and left

Silent through centuries, ever and anon
Venture to probe again the vault
bereft

Of all now save the lesser lights, a mist
Of multitudinous points, yet suns,
men say—

And this leaps ruby, this lurks
amethyst,

But where may hide what came
and loved our clay?

How shall the sage detect in yon
expanse

The star which chose to stoop and
stay for us?

Unroll the records! Hailed ye such
advance

Indeed, and did your hope vanish
thus?

Watchers of twilight, is the worst
averred?

We shall not look up, know our-
selves are seen,

Speak, and be sure that we again are
heard,

Acting or suffering, have the disk's
serene

Reflect our life, absorb an earthly flame,
Nor doubt that, were mankind
inert and numb,

Its core had never crimsoned all the
same,

Nor, missing ours, its music fallen
dumb?

Oh, dread succession to a dizzy post,
Sad sway of sceptre whose mere
touch appals,

Ghastly dethronement, cursed by
those the most

On whose repugnant brow the
crown next falls!

THIRD SPEAKER

I

Witless alike of will and way divine,
How heaven's high with earth's low
should intertwine!

Friends, I have seen through your
eyes: now use mine!

II

Take the least man of all mankind,
as I;

Look at his head and heart, find how
and why

He differs from his fellows utterly:

III

Then, like me, watch when nature by
degrees

Grows alive round him, as in Arctic seas
(They said of old) the instinctive water
flees

IV

Toward some elected point of central
rock,

As though, for its sake only, roamed
the flock

Of waves about the waste: awhile
they mock

V

With radiance caught for the occasion,
—hues

Of blackest hell now, now such reds
and blues

As only heaven could fitly interfuse,—

VI

The mimic monarch of the whirlpool,
king

O' the current for a minute: then they
wring

Up by the roots and oversweep the
thing,

VII

And hasten off, to play again elsewhere
The same part, choose another peak as
bare.

They find and flatter, feast and finish
there.

VIII

When you see what I tell you,—
nature dance

About each man of us, retire, advance,
As though the pageant's end were to
enhance

IX

His worth, and—once the life, his
product, gained—

Roll away elsewhere, keep the strife
sustained,

And show thus real, a thing the North
but feigned—

X

When you acknowledge that one world
could do

All the diverse work, old yet ever new,
Divide us, each from other, me from
you,—

XI

Why, where's the need of Temple,
when the walls

O' the world are that? What use of
swells and falls

From Levites' choir, Priests' cries, and
trumpet-calls?

XII

That one Face, far from vanish, rather
grows,

Or decomposes but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and
knows,

